



# Scarlet Street

The Magazine of Mystery and Horror

No. 14/Spring 1994/\$5.95 U.S./\$6.95 Can.

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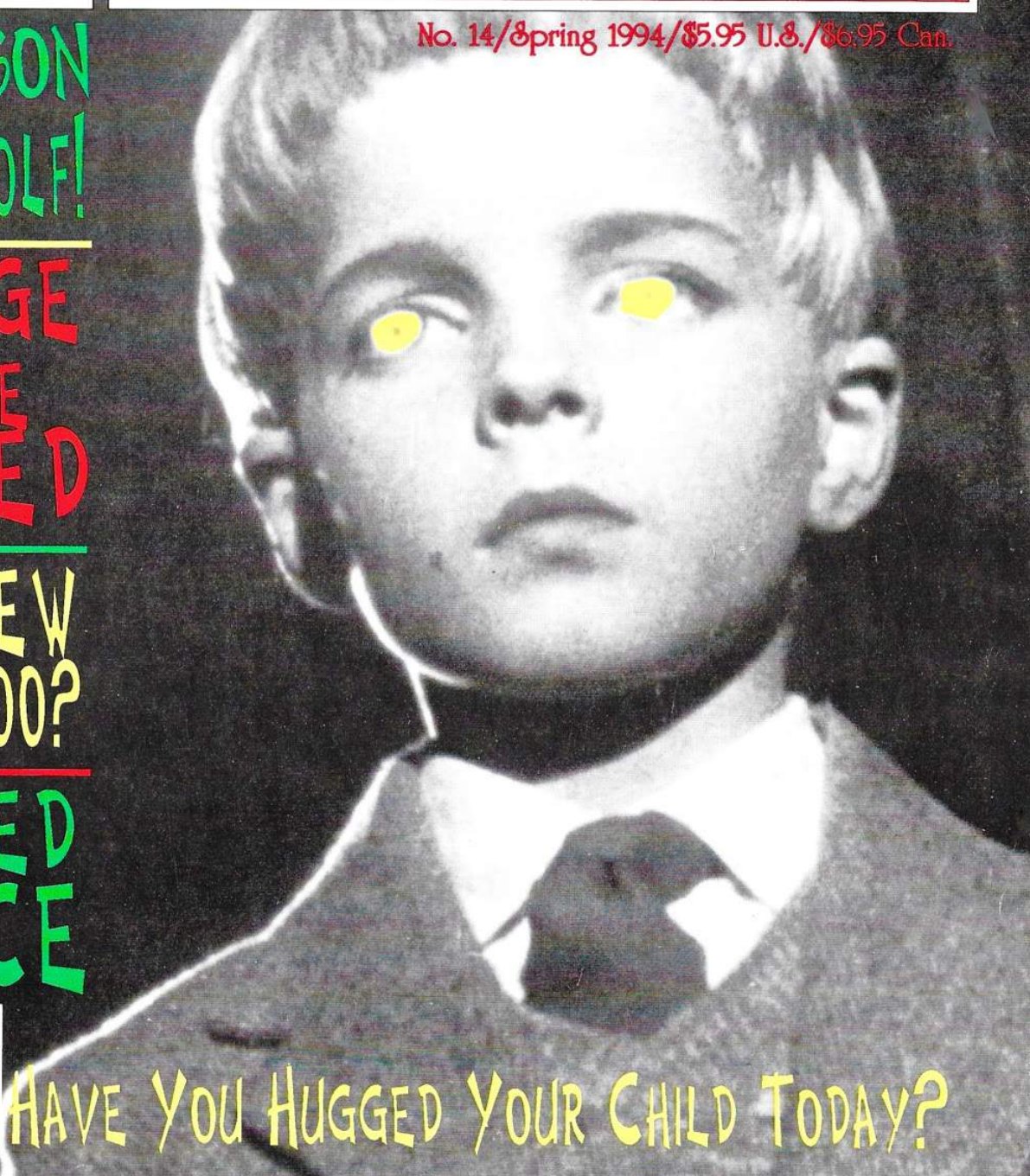
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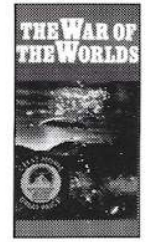
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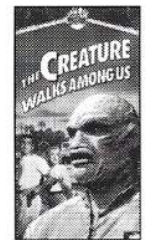
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COVER PHOTOS: Jack Nicholson as the leering lycanthrope of WOLF (1994), and bright-eyed Martin Stephens in VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED (1960).



# Scarlet Letters

*Scarlet Street* continues to top itself with each issue, but it will be hard to beat #13, the Anniversary Issue.

I was particularly pleased to read the interview with Terry Kilburn. I remember him in *FIEND WITHOUT A FACE* as a dedicated actor with whom it was a pleasure to work. Even if he now remembers it as "a terrible movie", it didn't show in his attitude or his performance at the time, which is the mark of the true professional, and I do agree with his comment that more people have heard of *FIEND* than *GOODBYE, MR. CHIPS* today!

May I correct Michael Brunas' description of me as *FIEND*'s uncredited coproducer? Actually, I was executive producer and John Croydon was our line producer, titles which were not generally defined on screen in England at the time.

I can't agree with Bryan Senn about *THE HAUNTING*. Having recently screened it alongside a copy of the original English release version of *CURSE OF THE DEMON*, I have to say that the latter was far superior as a story of the supernatural, although *THE UNINVITED* still surpasses them both.

It's good to hear that Priestley's *AN INSPECTOR CALLS* will be transferred to the Broadway stage from London. The London production is magnificent, and I hope it will not be "Americanized" in the transition. There was an excellent film version with Alastair Sim in the 50s.

David Stuart Davies' article *THE THREE GABLES* is most interesting, especially as *THE LAST VAMPIRE* was just telecast on the PBS series *MYSTERY!* this week. It is indeed one of the poorest additions to the Granada Sherlock Holmes series, and Jeremy Brett's performance is so far over the top that it should be quietly forgotten. A strange "glitch" occurred in the telecast when Diana Rigg, in introducing Part Two, correctly described the events of Part One and then finished by saying that we would now see the conclusion of *THE ELIGIBLE BACHELOR*.

The adventures of Aron Kincaid continue to fascinate, espe-

cially his reference to an unseen version of Joseph Conrad's "The Secret Sharer" in which he costarred with David Soul. There is a superb black/white film of this Conrad story which was made in the early 1950s by John Brahm and costarred James Mason, Michael Pate (Kincaid's role?), and Gene Lockhart. Huntington Hartford produced it as part of a feature film containing two famous author stories under the title *FACE TO FACE*. John Brahm directed it, and RKO released the feature. The second story was Stephen Crane's "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky" with Robert Preston and Marjorie Steele (Mrs. Hartford at the time), directed by Bretaigne Windust. *FACE TO FACE* was released unsuccessfully as a new concept in big-screen entertainment, "a Duo-Drama featuring two famous author stories with two outstanding casts".

A third story, "Hello Out There", based on William Saroyan's play,



starring Harry Morgan and Marjorie Steele, was also filmed but never used. It was directed by James Whale (his last film). Not shown theatrically, it is now listed as a separate short in the catalogue of Kit Parker Films and worth any film buff's attention.

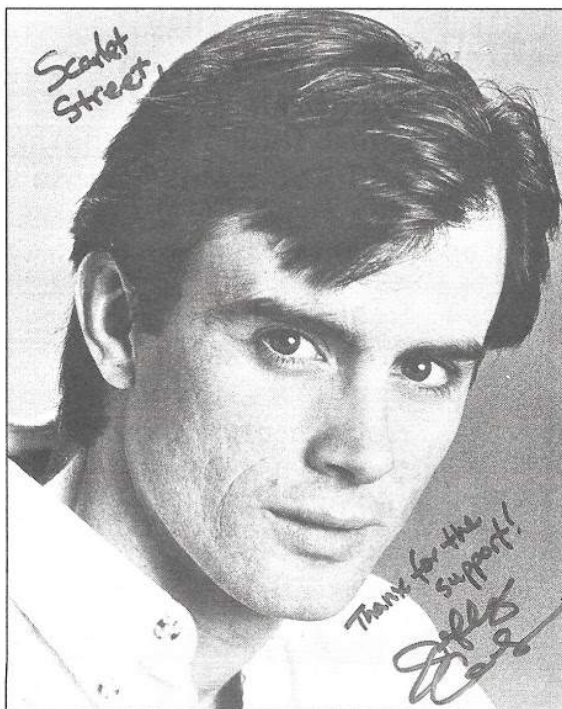
Richard Gordon  
Gordon Films, Inc.  
New York, NY

I loved the article on *THE ADVENTURES OF SHERLOCK HOLMES* in #13, and marvelled at the amount of behind-the-scenes info unearthed regarding the various drafts of the script. An excellent job all around! My only quibble was that Rathbone's "musical number" at the garden party—one of my favorite scenes from any Holmes movie!—got skimmed over in the discussion.

A few corrections: Terry Kilburn's recollection of Ida Lupino screen-testing for *THE LIGHT THAT FAILED* around the time of *THE ADVENTURES* is obviously wrong, since *LIGHT* (1937) was shot and released long before *THE ADVENTURES* was made. Aron Kincaid's memory failed him, too: Paul Petersen's Azalea Picture was *YEAR 2889* (a remake of AIP's *DAY THE WORLD ENDED*, not *HIDEOUS SUN DEMON*). Secondly, a grip fell from the catwalks and was killed during production of *DR. GOLDFOOT AND THE BIKINI MACHINE*, not *GHOST IN THE INVISIBLE BIKINI*.

Finally—back to Holmes—a bit of trivia which may or may not be well-known to fans of Rathbone and Bruce. Between the two-film Fox series and the Universal Holmeses, Warner Bros. had set them up to star in a Holmes adventure: *THE SPECKLED BAND*. Warners announced in October 1941 that they were shelving it due to difficulties en-

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Jeffrey Combs

Continued on page 10

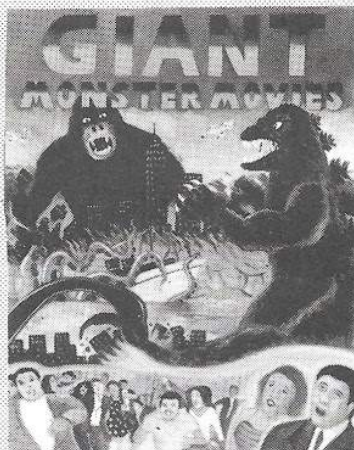


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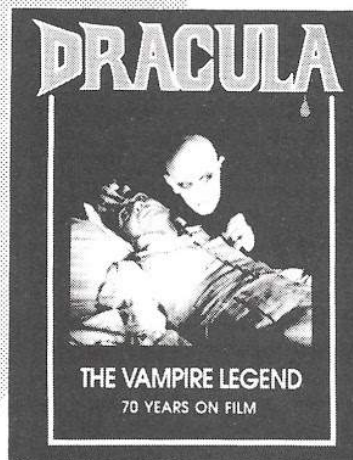
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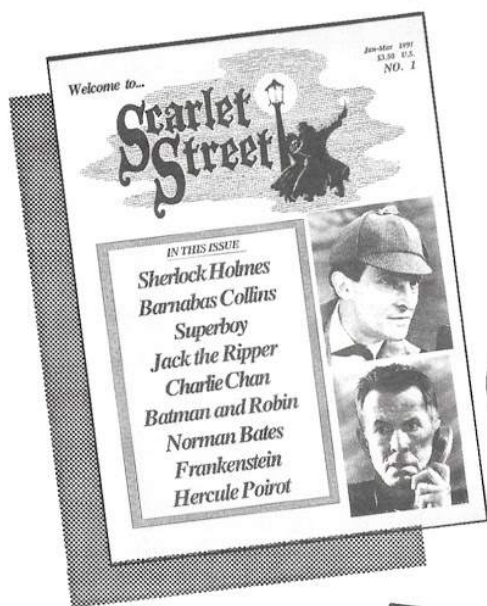
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—Forrest J Ackerman

I loved the "spread" on my work and all the nice comments.

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*Scarlet Street* is a delight!

—George Baxt

It's a really intriguing magazine. I enjoyed every article.

—Jack Larson

Everything about *Scarlet Street* appeals to the perverse lust for lunacy in me. Congratulations on a job well done.

—Rex Reed

Good columns and superior writing mark *Scarlet Street*.

—Baby Boomer Collectibles

Your standards are beautifully high.

—Yvette Vickers

It's really outstanding!

—Robert Bloch

It's truly a terrific magazine! I don't know how you manage to pack so much in one issue. If you can't find something you like in this publication, you might as well give up.

—Neal Barrett, Jr.

*Scarlet Street: The Magazine of Mystery and Horror* is an attractive and entertaining magazine . . .

—Ellen Datlow

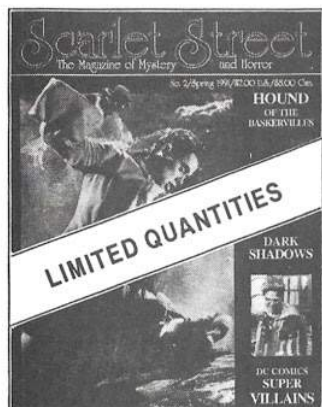
*The Year's Best Fantasy and Horror*

I enjoyed the whole magazine. It is certainly entertaining to look at, and a good solid "read", too. I wish *Scarlet Street* a long, mysterious, and horrific future!

—Elizabeth Shepherd



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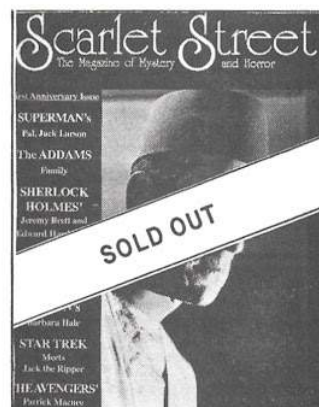
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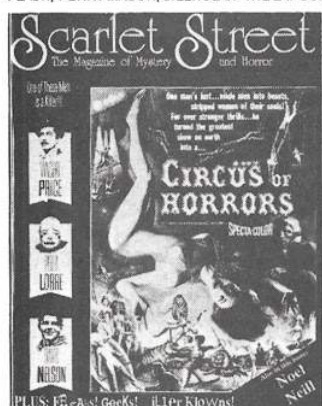
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No. 5: Barbara Hale, Patrick Macnee, Jack Larson, THE HOUSE THAT SCREAMED, Jeremy Brett, Edward Hardwicke, Christopher Lee.



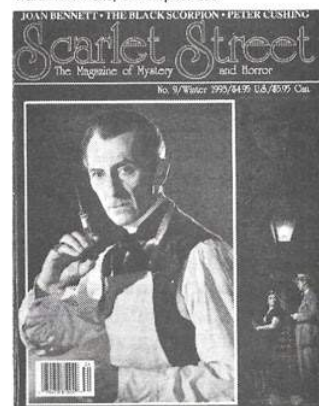
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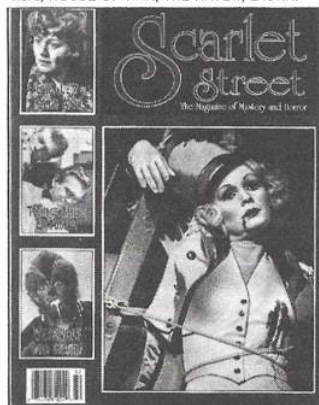
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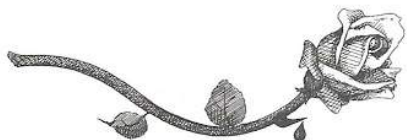
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# Frankly Scarlet



"M" is for the murders she's committed,  
"O" is for the offspring she's destroyed . . .

But enough of that! Enough, I say! I have come here not to bury motherhood, but to praise it. Yes, this is *Scarlet Street's* special Mother's Day Tribute—and, rather than trot out the usual mob of monstrous mamas, we on the *Street* have chosen to stress those mommies that were (and are) dearest.

On a personal level, that means I want to pay tribute to my own patient (if often exasperated) parent. As I've mentioned in an earlier edition of this column, it was Mom who took me to my very first horror movie. (BRIDES OF DRACULA, which we saw one sunny afternoon at the Prospect Theater on Ninth Street in Brooklyn.) It was Mom who drove me time and again to the one magazine store, to my knowledge, that carried *Fantastic Monsters of the Films*. (Oddly enough, that was again in Brooklyn, at the corner of Ninth Street and Fifth Avenue. We had left what was then the home of the Dodgers for the suburbs of New Jersey seven years earlier, but returned regularly to visit with relatives.) And it was Mom (and Dad) who stayed up with me the first time I watched a horror movie on television. (It was THE MUMMY'S GHOST and I got through it just fine, only to fall foul the following week to the crazed eyes of the BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN, the sight of which sent me reeling backward in my chair for almost the entire length of the room.)

Mom did what approaches the impossible for many parents: She encouraged me in interests for which she had no interest herself. She still does. So if you Scarlet Streeters will allow me to mix my holidays for a moment, let this issue's FRANKLY

SCARLET be a valentine to my Mom on Mother's Day. I love her with all my hearts. (I keep a collection in glass jars beneath the bed.)

\*\*\*

And what of moviedom's moms, mommies, maws, and mamas? Well, gang, in this issue you'll find MILDRED PIERCE, who, in the 1945 film noir classic of the same name, sacrifices all for her ungrateful child, Veda. Was there ever a more devoted mom than Mildred? (Sure, she goes a little overboard, setting up a former business partner to take a murder rap so that the guilty party—Veda—can go free . . .)

Then there's Anthea Zellaby, prominent citizen of the VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED (1960), who wants nothing better than the love of



Happy Mother's Day!

her only child, David. (The problem is, she's given birth to a blonde-haired, aureate-eyed alien, so it's a wee bit difficult . . .)

Then there's dotty old Auntie Roo, whose kindness to kiddies is more renowned than Michael Jackson's. Is it a surprise that two innocent-looking lambs are the shocking answer to the question WHO SLEW AUNTIE ROO? (1971)? Not to us, it isn't.

And don't let's forget Norma Bates, whose love for her troubled son, Norman, is sadly insufficient to keep him from going PSYCHO (1960) and poisoning and stuffing her. (Okay, okay, so her love for Normie is a tad excessive, a tad demonstrative, a tad incestuous . . .)

Nevertheless, it's clear that we adorable little darlings have much to

answer for—and that the overwhelming ingratitude of the above bambinos is not only sharper than a serpent's tooth, but deadlier by far.

You'll find pithy and perceptive pieces on the films mentioned above in the pages of this ish—but, like Oliver Norvelle Hardy, we at *Scarlet Street* are not given to resting on our Laurels. (No, we're not afraid to take a Stan!) You'll also find fascinating interviews with the talented folk who made these movies: Ann Blyth (vicious Veda in MILDRED PIERCE), Barbara Shelley (Anthea in VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED), Curtis Harrington (director of WHO SLEW AUNTIE ROO?), and that master of poisonous penmanship, Robert Bloch (author of *Psycho*).

You'll also discover a mom of a different color: SERIAL MOM, for whom director John Waters took time out from his killer schedule to talk with publisher Jessie Lilley.

I won't give away all the other goodies you'll find packed in these pages, but I do want to thank our friends and "guest critics" Noel Neill and Jack Larson. Noel and Jack had already agreed to review LOIS & CLARK's unofficial remake of PANIC IN THE SKY, one of the best episodes of THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN, when California was rocked and rolled by a devastating earthquake. Nevertheless, they came through, and we're extremely grateful. (I guess all those years on the *Daily Planet* taught them to get their stories in, no matter what!)

\*\*\*

As I write this, the East Coast is undergoing its own chilly trials and tribulations thanks to (how fitting!) Mother Nature. I haven't witnessed such a slushy snow job since the last time I went channel-hopping and made a lamentable stop at THE 700 CLUB. (Pat Robertson, who makes The Joker seem a font of reason by comparison, was blaming both the quake and the freeze on God's anger at pro-choicers and homosexuals.)

By the time you read this, spring will have sprung. Birds will be twittering, buds will be budding, and, with any luck, God will have gotten himself a better press agent . . .

Enjoy!

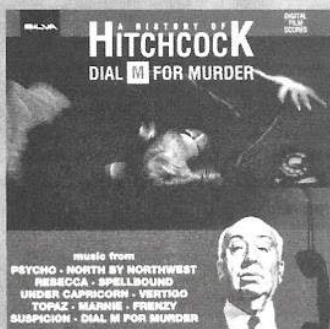
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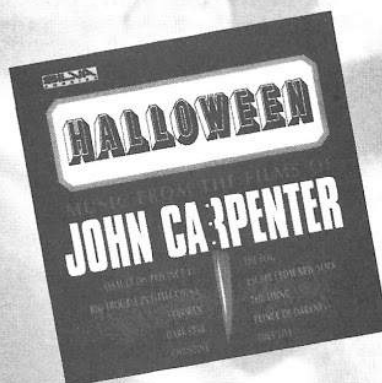


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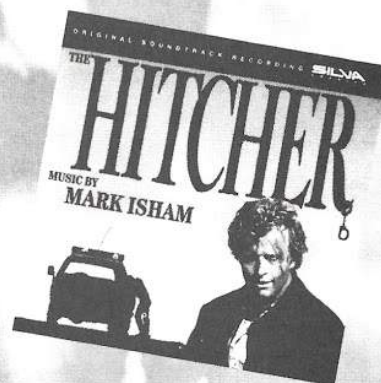


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*Continued from page 4*

countered in clearing all rights in the complicated copyright setup covering the Holmes tales. Was a script ever written? And can a denizen of *Scarlet Street* lay his (or her) hot little hands on a copy?

Lorenzo Cameron  
Ashton, LA

Fanboys were hopping mad back when that MR. MOM fella was cast as the "Dark K-nigt", but that movie proved to be just as geeky as the graphic text (comic book, to you lowbrows). So quit chewing your shrouds, unlifers—maybe the same will be true with INTERVIEW!

Will Day  
East Eddington, ME  
*Okay! Right! Huh?*

Many thanks for your fine tribute to the late actor Vincent Price (#13). Mr. Price touched my life not only through the rich legacy of his films but also through our mutual interest in art. During my correspondence with him over the last 10 years of his life, he was kind enough to suggest museums to visit and particular artists to see. He was also most generous in signing many photographs and posters from my collection.

I know of no other film star who was more kind to his fans. He was a true gentleman who enriched the lives of all those he came in contact with. I feel privileged to have known him in my own small way.

Mike Wozniak  
Baton Rouge, LA

I want to congratulate all of you at *Scarlet Street*. You have a fine magazine—especially compared to *Film-fax*, which is filled with advertising.

I'd like to see photos and features on the following: the special effects involved in both THE FLYING SERPENT and FIEND WITHOUT A FACE. I'd also like to see a special article about the little-known and much-maligned small film studio of Allied Artists—if not that, then how about a history of the horror and sci-fi movies that Allied Artists produced, released, or distributed?

Again, many thanks, especially for the *Scarlet Street* #12 article/interview on Zacherley's lost TV show.

Mark Parr  
Shelbyville, IL

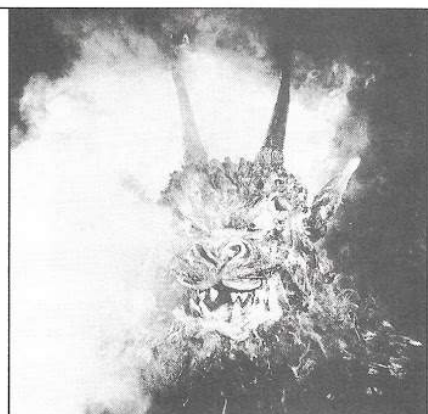
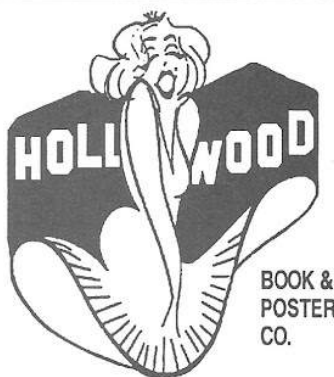
*Hope you caught Scarlet Street #13, Mark; it had FIEND WITHOUT A FACE, a chat with FIEND star Terry Kilburn, and a special tribute to THE FLYING SERPENT's George Zucco.*

Some time ago, a good friend of mine inflicted your magazine upon me. If I have any complaints about your work, they would be pointless tirades about how the thing should be monthly, or that fewer ads appear. (I cannot afford the time needed to take on a second job in order to purchase the delightful items listed therein.)

I, too, agree that the grim specter of the Dreaded Censor should be exorcised from our national soul. However, there is something that must be pointed out. Few films are being produced that possess the power to enthrall and frighten the way films once did. We have lost more than St. Vincent, we have lost the desire to witness genteel nightmares . . . or so Hollywood thinks, judging by the gorror-cybersplat mind-numbers foisted upon us with such chilling regularity.

We are blessed with the advent of videotape, and of course the current entry in the marketplace of those gems from long ago. My children love Vincent Price, Karloff, and the rest.

If possible, I would like to see an extended article, a la WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HELEN?, on THE WICKER MAN (one of my personal favorites), or perhaps the under-

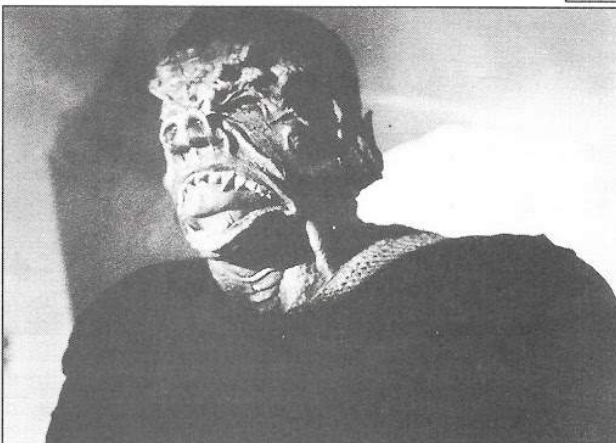


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appreciated PUMPKINHEAD (wretched title for a perfectly wonderful film).

I'm not a Holmes fan, but do enjoy Nero Wolfe. Does anyone recall the name of the actor who portrayed Wolfe in a film titled simply NERO WOLFE? The actor also had a small role in the Goldie Hawn vehicle THE DUCHESS AND THE DIRTWATER FOX. The Wolfe film was a letter-perfect retelling of Rex Stout's *The Doorbell Rang*.

Am I the only one who thinks that Sydney Greenstreet should have been Wolfe, Bogart Goodwin, and Lorre Fritz, Wolfe's cook?

Your magazine is a delight, with at least two articles each and every issue to make my day. Few (if any) other magazines can say the same.

James R. Allard, Jr.

Mishawaka, IN

Take that second job, James! Remember that our advertisers (and their terrific products) keep *Scarlet Street* on Easy Street . . . or at least in the same neighborhood. You're not the only one who thinks Greenstreet was tailor-made to play Nero Wolfe, which is why he did just that for several years on the radio. In the 1977 telepic NERO WOLFE, the non-galloping gourmet was Thayer

David, who was a star of the original DARK SHADOWS and, in 1959's JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH, committed one of moviedom's most shocking murders by making a duck dinner of Gertrude.

✉

I must say that your magazine is far superior in content to *The Armchair Detective*, which I have subscribed to since its inception. In #12, I particularly liked the lengthy article, with pictures, on the movie THE UNINVITED. It is one of my favorites and I watch it whenever it is on TV.

Eileen Peterson

Vista, CA

✉

That anybody could defend the actions of a Joe McCarthy (SCARLET LETTERS, #12) in a nation that's elected a Nixon, a Reagan, and a Bush, tried to make a hero of Ollie North, and used its loyal citizens as unknowing human guinea pigs for the last 50 years, is no surprise.

That Tom Weaver's is the kind of automatic, knee-jerk Americanism that brooks no dissent, requires no thought, and ultimately does the tenets upon which our beloved country is founded a profound disservice, is no surprise.

That America's brand of democracy includes destroying the lives and careers of democracy's critics while extolling the freedom of speech with which we are all reputedly blessed, is no surprise. It's sadly, tragically typical.

R. J. Owen

Chicago, IL

✉

In *Scarlet Street* #12, Tom Weaver wonders how Gale Sondergaard got on the blacklist. According to Victor Navasky's *Naming Names*, she and her husband, Herbert Biberman were members of the Communist Party.

Is this a shameful thing? It must be, because though the interview you published dealt extensively with politics, neither Sondergaard nor the interviewer [Boze Hadleigh] ever brought it up. Of course, the interviewer may have automatically assumed that any charges made by the Committee were false.

In *The Hollywood Hissables*, Gregory Mank says the Bibermans were involved in "liberal causes". People once expected a great deal of their idols. In his book *Capturing the Culture*, Richard Grenier tells of popular singer Gracie Fields, who left England during the Blitz at the beginning



of World War II for the safety of America. She came back at the end of the war to give a concert and no one came. Her fans felt that she had abandoned their country in its hour of need and that was the end of her.

It is a pity that Sondergaard, who belonged to Stalin's American fan club during the years of the purge trials (where you got more than blacklisted), did not live to see Russia today. The book *Lenin's Tomb* relates an amusing story about a visit the author made to a party institute during the Gorbachev years when the faculty and students first became free to say what they really felt about the Communist system. While he was there, he attended a showing of the Oliver Stone film *WALL STREET*. When Gordon Gekko announced that greed is good, the whole audience burst into wild applause. Miss Sondergaard concluded the interview by saying her side was winning. Wrong again. The socialist dream is dead.

Robert Hauser

Glen Ridge, NJ

Gracie Fields arrived in the United States in 1940 with her actor/director husband, Monty Banks. (Banks, having committed the indiscretion of being born

in Italy, had been declared an alien by British authorities, making it necessary that he leave the country.) Returning to England in 1945, Gracie Fields continued to work successfully until her retirement to Capri in the 1950s. She was created Dame Commander of the Order of the British Empire in 1979. She died several months later at the age of 81. That was the end of her.

☐

I feel your magazine ranks with *Filmfax* as the two best magazines to come along since *Famous Monsters*.

A few suggestions for future issues: How about in-depth studies of KING OF THE ZOMBIES, STRANGE CASE OF DR. RX, NIGHT MONSTER, MAN-MADE MONSTER, and let's not forget a very underrated film—THE LEOPARD MAN?

I saw THE LEOPARD MAN when I was six years old. I can still remember the entire audience being in terror during the "tunnel sequence". Many of these films have to be seen in 35mm to get the true effect.

Richard Haza

Baldwin, NY

Film what? Famous who? Just kidding; that's fine company, indeed.

☐

About 20 years ago, at age six, I watched an old horror movie which I remember to this day as having scared the wits out of me. I suspect it was from the 30s, for the sound quality was horrible. I suspect it was a zombie film, perhaps a vampire film with zombie-like vampires.

Although I have forgotten the rest of the film, I remember one brief scene. The scene is set outside, or perhaps in a cellar. The screen is almost entirely pitch black. The action of the scene is the male (who my memory identifies as "the zombie master") summoning his female zombie. The only dialogue I remember is his speaking "Come, Judith."

Sean Warner

Gardner, MA

What's with all these six-year-olds running off to the movies? Don't they have any pool halls where you live? Scarlet Street's team of experts went a'hunting, but failed to come up with any zombie and/or vampire flick of the 1930s whose heroine answered to "Judith". The scene sounds like something from 1932's WHITE ZOMBIE, in which Bela Lugosi played the zombie master—but that fright film's heroine, played by Madge Bellamy, was named

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### BACK ISSUE HIGHLIGHTS:

◆ Movie Club #1 (not shown): *Jurassic Park* compared to 11 great dino movies of the past; Classic Horrors on video; sneak preview of *Regenerated Man*, a new indie sci-fi film; introduction to video and laser collecting and home theaters. More than 50 photos.

◆ Movie Club #2 (top, left): The Sci-Fi Channel—its best TV shows, movies and the channel's history; the best sassy and sexy "JD" movies; *The Fugitive* TV series and movie; tribute to Vincent Price. More than 60 photos.

◆ Movie Club #3 (left): *Unsung Gems* (good movies you rarely read about); the forgotten "ape woman" movies; indie director Fred Olen Ray; *The Black Scorpion*. More than 50 photos.

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Madeleine. (Contrary to rumor, Lugosi did not summon her by singing "Paddlin' Madeleine Home".) Anyone out there got the answer?

I'm a UK subscriber, drawn to your excellent magazine by the article in the Fall 1993 issue (#12) about Bela Lugosi. Maybe one of your readers can clear up a mystery which has bothered me over the years, connected with one of Lugosi's best films: *THE BODY SNATCHER*.

I first saw this in the mid 40s, on its first UK release. I was very impressed. I saw it again a year later in Palestine (later the state of Israel) when I was even more impressed—there were two extra scenes!

One scene shows the body of Lugosi (murdered by Boris Karloff) lying in a tank of (I think) water. Very striking.

The other scene is even more striking. At the end of the film, Henry Daniell (the doctor) is driving in a buggy through a storm. Behind him is the corpse of an old lady in a shroud. Suddenly the shroud is drawn back to reveal the face of Karloff—also murdered! Now comes the cut. As the buggy goes on its way, Karloff's face is seen clearly behind the folds of the shroud. Then the

corpse rolls against the doctor and puts out a hand and grabs him! End of cut. The horses bolt and the doctor is thrown to his death.

I have never (and I worked for some time on the magazine *Films and Filming*) heard any explanation for these cuts—which are also in the video I own—though an old friend once saw the uncut film in South Africa. The film was shown here on television at Christmas—again cut!

Michael Raper  
London

The shots of Lugosi in the drink and Karloff in the shroud were cut by the British censor 'way back when *THE BODY SNATCHER* (1945) was originally released overseas. Since that was nearly 50 years ago, it's high time that British television and video make the film available in its complete form—as it is in the States.

The horror-host story (#13) by Richard Scrivani was fantastic! It was interesting to see other horror hosts popping up all over the country, a phenomena that is returning with a vengeance!

I recently changed jobs and moved to the big city (or at least what passes for the big city in this neck of the woods) to work at the CBS affil-

ate, WAGA Channel Five. I am trying to get them interested in a hosted format, but I'm not sure if they want to go that route with their programming. In the interim, I'm looking into doing a cable access show, much as Ghoul Dad is producing in Chicago.

I gotta go for now; Rufus has gotten into the ant farm again! Keep 'em screamin'!

Ben Armstrong  
"Dr. Speculo"  
Atlanta, GA

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### Here's the lineup!

#### SCIENCE FICTION

**UNNATURAL** (1952) Eric Von Stroheim, Hildegard Neft. A fascinating story of a brilliant, yet evil scientist who creates a femme fatale via artificial insemination. From 35mm. 1/15/94 \$131

**BELA LUGOSI MEETS A BROOKLYN GORILLA** (1953) Bela Lugosi, Duke Mitchell, Sammy Petrillo. One of the great 'baddies' of all time with Bela turning people into gorillas. Upgraded from a nice 16mm original. 5/16/93 L030

**BEYOND THE CURTAIN OF SPACE** (1953, aka **BEYOND THE MOON**) Richard Crane, Robert Lyden, Scotty Beckett. The first Rocky Jones and the Space Rangers adventure. Upgraded from a good looking 16mm original. 12/17/93 S025

**DEVIL GIRL FROM MARS** (1954) Hazel Court, Hugh McDermott. A ruthless female alien and her giant robot land in the English countryside, terrorizing the local citizenry. From a stunning 16mm original print. 7/1/93 S033

**BRIDE OF THE MONSTER** (1955) Bela Lugosi, Tor Johnson. Directed by Ed Wood. One of the great 'baddies' of all time. Bela's a mad scientist conducting atomic experiments in a spooky old house by a swamp that harbors a monster octopus. From a stunning 35mm print. 1/25/94 S038

**GIANT FROM THE UNKNOWN** (1957) Ed Kemmer, Morris Ankrum, Bob Steele. A scientific expedition stumbles upon a giant, perfectly preserved conquistador who's brought back to life by a bolt of lightning. Upgraded from 16mm with a nice clean audio track. 12/16/93 S050

**QUATERMASS 2** (1957) Brain Donlevy, Sidney James. A space scientist stumbles upon a secret plant in the English countryside that's filled with invading aliens. A classic. Upgraded from an original 35mm print. 9/1/93 S132

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**AMAZING TRANSPARENT MAN** (1959) Douglas Kennedy, Marguerite Chapman. A madman uses an atomic invisibility device to turn a gangster into a transparent uranium thief. Great drive-in fun! Upgraded from a gorgeous 16mm original. 1/15/94 S056

**MISSILE TO THE MOON** (1959) Richard Travis, Gary Clarke. Two teenage hoodlums stowaway aboard a rocket, bound for the moon! From a beautiful, uncut 35mm print. 7/8/93 S105

### TEENAGERS FROM OUTER SPACE

**TEENAGERS FROM OUTER SPACE** (1959) David Love, Dawn Anderson. A flying saucer filled with ray gun wielding teenage aliens lets loose a giant, lobster-like monster upon the Earth. From a stunning 16mm original print. 1/13/92 S052

**THE HEAD** (1959) Horst Frank, Michel Simon. A must see obscenity! A serum which keeps severed portions of the human body alive is used by a mad doctor on its own inventors decapitated head. 12/15/93 S057

**THE WASP WOMAN** (1959) Susan Cabot, Barboura Morris. A Roger Corman goodie. An eccentric scientist turns the head of a cosmetics firm into a murdering, wasp-like monster. From a mint 16mm original print. 9/3/93 S051

**LAST WOMAN ON EARTH** (1960) Anthony Carbone, Betsy Jones Moreland. Roger Corman's sci-fi drama about the three surviving members of a world holocaust. Recently upgraded from a 35mm color print. 10/1/93 S062

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**THE PHANTOM PLANET** (1961) Dean Fredericks, Coleen Gray. A real enjoyable and very underrated sci-fi 'B' opus about an astronaut who's stranded on an invisible planetoid, threatened by a fleet of marauding alien monsters. From a nice 16mm original print. 12/30/93 S065

**ASSIGNMENT OUTER SPACE** (1962) Rick Von Nutter, Archie Savage. An atmospheric space opera about a runaway space station who's force field threatens to destroy the earth. In color from a nice 16mm original print. 5/1/93 S073

**THE EYE CREATURES** (1965) John Ashley, Cynthia Hull. Invading aliens match wits with a group of 'smarter' than the local authorities' teenagers who outwit the monsters and send them packing by movie's end. Upgraded from a nice color, 16mm print. 12/28/93 S085

**VOYAGE TO THE PREHISTORIC PLANET** (1965) Basil Rathbone, Faith Domergue. The story of man's first expedition to Venus and the monstrous perils he faces there. Upgraded from 16mm. 12/30/93 S086

**FIRST SPACESHIP ON VENUS** (1963) Gunther Simon, Kurt Rackelmann. An international space expedition lands on Venus to find the planet completely destroyed by nuclear war. Upgraded from a nice color, 16mm original print. 12/30/94 S080

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#### HORROR

**VAMPIRE** (1932) Julian West, Harriet Gerrard. The use of light, shadow, and camera angles are translated into a pureness of horror in this classic vampire-in-a-castle tale. Not actually an upgrade, but a new release of the 65 minute English subtitled version which was previously unavailable. H198

**JUGGERNAUT** (1936) Boris Karloff, Joan Wyndham. Boris plots with a greedy woman to slowly poison her rich husband. Much better definition and overall video quality in this beautiful upgrade from 16mm. 1/15/94 K002

**FACE AT THE WINDOW** (1939) Tod Slaughter, John Warwick. If you've never seen a Slaughter film, this is the one to start with. There's a monster, a mad killer, and a crazed scientist experimenting with reanimation. From 16mm. 1/15/94 TS07

**BLUEBEARD** (1944) John Carradine, Jean Parker. Probably Carradine's best performance in a horror film as he plays a mad killer on the loose in Paris. Upgraded from a nice, original 16mm print. 12/15/93 C003

**AMAZING MR. X** (1948) Turhan Bey, Lynn Bari. A highly underrated, atmospheric chiller about a phony mystic and the ghost of a woman's dead husband. From a beautiful 16mm print. 1/15/94 H029

**VAMPIRE OVER LONDON** (1951) Bela Lugosi, Arthur Lucan. Kind of a dopey British comedy, but definitely one of Bela's best performances. Upgraded from a nice 16mm original. 1/30/94 L029

**DEVIL'S PARTNER** (1958) Ed Nelson, Richard Crane, Edgar Buchanan. A nifty and very under appreciated little 'B' shocker about a dry, dusty southwest town that's prey to witchcraft and murder. Upgraded from a stunning 16mm original print. 12/30/93 H038

**HORROR CHAMBER OF DR. FAUSTUS** (1959) Pierre Brasseur, Edith Scob. An all time horror classic! A mad scientist tries to restore his daughters hideous face by using skin from the faces of other young girls. Upgraded from 16mm. 1/30/94 H044





**FRIGHT** (1956 aka **SPELL OF THE HYPNOTIST**) Eric Fleming, Nancy Malone. A weird, hypnotic story about a young woman and a ruthless killer who turn out to be reincarnations of ancient lovers. Intriguing. Upgraded from a nice 16mm original print. 12/30/93 H035

**EYES WITHOUT A FACE** (1959) The longer, subtitled, French language version of the above film. From a stunning 16mm print. 11/1/93 H045

**HORROR HOTEL** (1960) Christopher Lee, Betta St. John. One of the best British horror films ever made. Lee plays a member of a grisly, New England witch's coven that partakes in human sacrifice. A slight upgrade from a gorgeous 16mm print. 1/15/94 H120

**TORMENTED** (1960) Richard Carlson, Julie Redding. Lovable Bert I. Gordon schlock about a pianist who's haunted by the ghostly head of his dead ex-girlfriend. Upgraded from a much brighter 16mm. 10/15/93 H155



**FACE OF THE SCREAMING WEREWOLF** (1958) Lon Chaney, Landa Varle. A Jerry Warren Mexican import. Not much of a movie, really, but Lon has some outstanding scenes as a werewolf including a dynamite transformation scene in front of a lab window. From 35mm. 12/20/93 H123



**CARNIVAL OF SOULS** (1962) Candace Hilligoss, Sidney Berger. One of the finest examples of low-budget film making at its best. The only survivor of a watery car wreck is haunted by a ghostly personage. A chilling organ music score. From an uncut 16mm print. 1/7/93 H065

**RING OF TERROR** (1962) George Mather, Austin Green. A medical student meets up with horror when he sneaks into a crypt to steal a ring off a corpse's finger. From 16mm. 1/20/94 H068

**SLAUGHTER OF THE VAMPIRES** (1962) Walter Brandt, Dieter Eppler. Bloodsuckers search for new victims while a "Van Helsing" type remains in hot pursuit. Upgraded from 16mm. 11/15/93 H070

**BLOODTHIRST** (1965) Robert Winston, Yvonne Nielson. An obscure monster movie about a strange woman who retains her youth via ritual killings. A cool looking monster is featured. Upgraded from 35mm. 4/1/93 H164

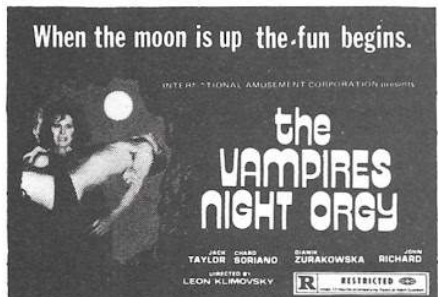
**GHOSTS OF HANLEY HOUSE** (1968) Barbara Chase, Wilkie De Marial. A Texas made b&w thriller about a series of murders committed in a haunted house. A nice upgrade from 16mm. 1/15/94 H091

**FURY OF THE WOLFMAN** (1970) Paul Naschy, Perla Cristal. Another of Paul's many performances as a werewolf. From a beautiful color 16mm print. 1/20/94 H092

**VENGEANCE OF THE ZOMBIES** (1972) Paul Naschy, Vic Winner. This is one of the more gruesome of Paul's films, featuring all kinds of weird and graphic zombie rites. 1/30/94 H096

**SAGA OF THE DRACULAS** (1972) Tina Sainz, Tony Isbert. The last heir to the Dracula family arrives at the castle of the infamous count. Definitely rated 'R'. Upgraded from a nice 16mm color print. 1/30/94 H097

**CURSE OF THE DEVIL** (1973) Paul Naschy, Faye Falcon. Paul is cursed with lycanthropy by an ancient witch whom his ancestor killed. Letterboxed in scope. From a beautiful 35mm print. 4/1/93 H149



**VAMPIRES NIGHT ORGY** (1973 aka **ORGY OF THE VAMPIRES**) Jack Taylor. A bus load of tourists find themselves in a vampire infested village. Previously edited nudity scenes have been restored. From a 35mm color print. 1/30/94 H119

**IT HAPPENED AT NIGHTMARE INN** (1973 aka **NIGHTMARE HOTEL**) Judy Geeson, Victor Alcázar. This chilling, Spanish horror film has now been upgraded from a nice 16mm original print which contains nearly 7 minutes more footage than our previous video master. 12/21/93 H150

#### SWORD AND SANDAL

**GIANTS OF THESSALY** (1960) Roland Carey, Ziva Rodann. Another retelling of the classic story of Jason and the golden fleece. Upgraded from a 16mm color print. 1/10/93 SS01



**SON OF SAMSON** Mark Forest, Chelo Alonzo. Samson's son, Maciste, shows up in Egypt where he leads a revolt against an evil queen. Letterboxed in scope. From a stunning, technicolor 16mm print. 9/1/93 SS04

**MOLE MEN AGAINST THE SON OF HERCULES** (1961) Mark Forest. Maciste battles to save his people from a race of weird, underground albinos. Upgraded from a color 16mm print. 12/30/93 SS05

**LION OF THEBES** (1964) Mark Forest, Yvonne Furneaux. An exciting adventure epic about the legendary Helen of Troy. A top notch sword and sandal opus with a literate script. Upgraded from 16mm. 12/29/93 SS48

**TOWER OF SCREAMING VIRGINS** (1971) Terry Torday, Jean Plat. A cruel French countess takes many lovers for herself. After she satisfies her lust, she has them disposed of. Rated 'R'. From a spectacular 35mm print. 5/1/93 H137

#### JUNGLE THRILLS

**TARZAN'S REVENGE** (1938) Glenn Morris, Eleanor Holme. This Tarzan adventure has been available from many different video companies, but you've probably never seen it in such fine quality. From a gorgeous 16mm original print. 9/25/93 J017

**LAW OF THE JUNGLE** (1942) John King, Arline Judge, Mantan Moreland. A fugitive from justice and an outlaw scientist pursued through the jungle by Nazis. Upgraded from a dynamite 16mm original print. 9/24/93 J020

**SABAKA** (1953 aka **THE HINDU**) Boris Karloff, Victor Jory. A lavish color adventure about a man who becomes involved with a strange cult that worships a weird fire demon. From a technicolor 16mm print. 12/20/93 K013

**TARZAN AND THE TRAPPERS** (1956) Gordon Scott, Lesley Bradley. Tarzan battles with trapper attempting to loot a fabulous, lost city in the jungle. Upgraded from 16mm. 12/29/93 J032

#### MYSTERY-SUSPENSE-FILM NOIR

**UNEASY TERMS** (1948) Michael Rennie, Moira Lister. A superb British mystery about a detective who becomes mixed up in murder and blackmail. A great film. Upgraded from 16mm. 1/5/94 M086

**THE LIMPING MAN** (1953) Lloyd Bridges, Moira Lister. An ex-G.I. finds his sweetheart mixed up with murder and an espionage plot. Upgraded from 16mm. 1/05/94 M103

**POSTMARK FOR DANGER** (1956) Terry Moore, Robert Beatty. Scotland Yard steps in when a journalist in a car crash, but the woman thought to have been with him is found alive. Upgraded from 16mm. 1/5/94 M135

#### FORGOTTEN HORRORS

**A SHOT IN THE DARK** (1935) Charles Starrett, Edward Van Sloan. This excellent poverty row mystery features a murderer with a mysterious murder weapon. Upgraded from 16mm. 12/1/93 FH28

**THE DARK HOUR** (1936) Ray Walker, Irene Ware. A murder yarn which finds its characters and suspects all gathered in a big, dark house. From 16mm. 1/10/94 FH30

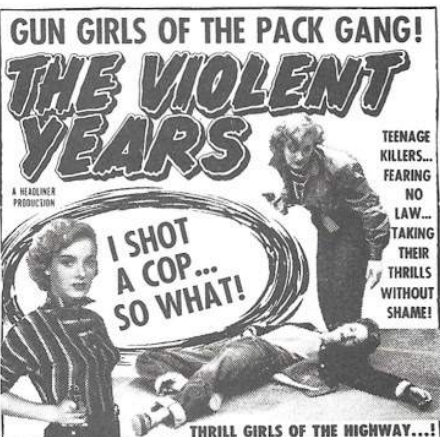
**THE STAR PACKER** (1934) John Wayne, Verna Hillie. A young girl's father is murdered by a mysterious bandit known as "the Shadow". She arrives at his ranch to find it inhabited by ghosts. From 16mm. 12/23/93 FH39

#### FANTASY

**BEYOND TOMORROW** (1940) Richard Carlson, Jean Parker. Three spirits decide to return to earth in order to help out a romantic young couple that needs help. Upgraded from 16mm. 12/30/93 F002

**SANTA CLAUS CONQUERS THE MARTIANS** (1964) John Call, Pia Zadora. So bad it's wonderful. Martians kidnap Santa so he can help brighten the lives of deprived Martian children. From a nice color 16mm print. 12/22/93 S084

#### JUVENILE SCHLOCK



**THE VIOLENT YEARS** (1956) Jean Moorhead, Barbara Weeks. Ed Wood wrote this hilarious screenplay about a gang of "bad" girls that hold up gas stations and molest young men. Upgraded from the most beautiful 35mm print you'll ever see. The absolute best on the market. Stunning! 1/11/93 X024

**THE CHOPPERS** (1961) Arch Hall, Jr., Marianne Gaba. Terrific drive-in schlock about a gang of car strippers who try to keep one step ahead of the law. Gaba's a 20 on a scale of 1 to 10. Upgraded from 35mm. 5/1/93 JS11

**NAKED YOUTH** (1961, aka **WILD YOUTH**) Robert Arthur, Robert Hutton, Carol Ohmart. A wild pack of kids unwittingly come into possession of a toy doll filled with high grade heroin. Ohmart is terrific as a female addict. Upgraded from 16mm. 12/30/93 JS19

**WILD ONES ON WHEELS** (1962) Francine York, Robert Blair, Ray Dennis Steckler. A sports car gang murders an ex-con and forces his wife to locate \$240,000 had buried in the desert. Upgraded from a beautiful 16mm original print. 8/1/93 JS20



PLEASE NOTE: THIS SALE ABSOLUTELY ENDS AT THE STROKE OF MIDNIGHT, MAY 31, 1994!



# the NEWS



# HOUND

Photo: Plan 10 Productions Ltd.

Aside from dusty Baskerville bones, spring cleaning at The Hound's den has unearthed these perilous press releases:

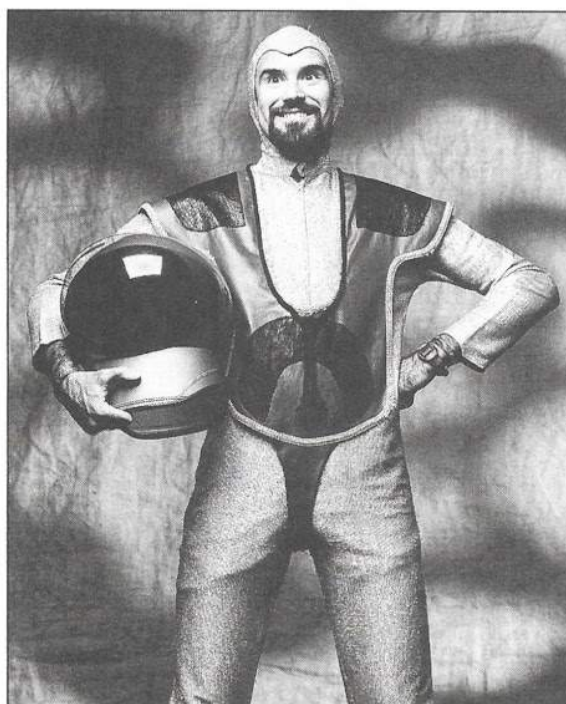
MARY SHELLEY'S FRANKENSTEIN, now being sewn up at Tri-Star Pictures, isn't the only Gothic classic haunting us from Hollywood: a Tim Burton production of Edgar Allan Poe's *Fall of the House of Usher* has been announced as an upcoming Warner Bros. release, and Victor Hugo's *Hunchback of Notre Dame* will become an animated Disney musical (!) with the helpful notes of BEAUTY AND THE BEAST composer Alan Menken. Andrew Lloyd Webber's PHANTOM OF THE OPERA is also said to be "on the front burner", but we'll believe that ghost when we see it.

THE SHADOW, Universal's big summer release starring Alec Baldwin, has already had some preview screenings, but advance word is as tough to find as its shadowy hero. You'll find these other recently-completed films in theaters before year's end: THE SPIRIT REALM, starring Diane Ladd and YOUNG INDIANA JONES star Sean Patrick Flanery; the Canaolan production VAMPIRE CONSPIRACY, featuring sitcom star Jasmine Guy; George Lucas' RADIOLAND MURDERS for Universal; Tim Burton's ED WOOD for Disney; and Warner Bros.' INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE—for better or worse.

PLAN 10 FROM OUTER SPACE, from Salt Lake City writer/director Trent Harris, sounds like an off-kilter cult classic in the making. This independent sci-fi comedy features alien conspiracies, buried hieroglyphics, and (possibly) Karen Black as Nehor from the planet Kolob. Who could ask for more? You could? Well, then, just wait for DRAGULA, a Canadian concoction starring Scarlett Divine, Drucilla Dirt, and Candy Slide. And don't ask for anything else!

Developing in the dark rooms of Tinseltown are planned updates of

THE GHOST AND MRS. MUIR (starring Sean Connery), THE GREEN HORNET (with Joe Dante as possible director), and PLANET OF THE APES (coscripted by Oliver Stone). Sigourney (Ripley) Weaver is being courted for—surprise!—ALIEN 4,



PLAN 10 FROM OUTER SPACE? Future events like this may effect you in the future!

even though she bit the dust in the previous installment—but, hey, it's sci-fi. TOTAL RECALL II begins preproduction at Carolco in June, and BATMAN III (with rumors of Marky Mark as Robin) rolls this fall.

Starting production in London is a remake of FORBIDDEN PLANET, with Irvin Kershner (THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK) as director and makeup/effects wiz Stan Winston as executive producer. Veteran Hollywood screenwriters Nelson Gidding (THE HAUNTING) and Sterling Silliphant are scripting; no word on casting yet—human or robot.

Gearing up are Stephen King's DOLORES CLAIBORNE, starring Kathy Bates and Jennifer Jason Leigh; ROUGH MAGIC, featuring

Bridget Fonda as a stylish sorceress on the run; and Paramount's Kirk-killing STAR TREK: THE NEXT GENERATION, boldly aiming for a Thanksgiving release. Also scheduled for late '94 is THE SAINT, now in preproduction at Paramount with Ralph Fiennes of SCHINDLER'S LIST the likely choice for the suave Simon Templar.

Future features: Robert Altman will produce and direct a bio of famed World War One spy MATA HARI for the revitalized RKO Pictures.... Steven Soderbergh (SEX, LIES AND VIDEO-TAPE) will remake the 1941 film noir drama CRISS CROSS, to be rechristened THE UNDERNEATH.... The "Quiller" spy novels by "Elliston Trevor" (néé Adam Hall) have been purchased by Limited Artists for a film series, possibly to star Willem Dafoe.... A modern witch covent seeks to improve their image with the help of a PR executive in NOT-FOR-PROFIT, from director Jenny Livingston (documentarian of PARIS IS BURNING).... Freddy Krueger's dad Wes Craven insists he's come up with a perfectly plausible reason for the "dead" Fred's return in A NIGHTMARE ON ELM STREET 7—and we're sure that

reason is printed on a New Line Cinema paycheck.... Spike Lee acts as executive producer of Savoy Pictures' horror spoof TALES FROM THE HOOD. Maybe William (Blacula) Marshall will dust off his fangs.

Besides the Caped Crusader, other comic book heroes (and villains) are fighting their way onto the silver screen: JUDGE DREDD is already in production in England with Sly Stallone toplining.... Director James Cameron's SPIDER-MAN is still in development at Carolco.... Sexy and macha British comic book heroine TANK GIRL will arrive via UA.... Richard Donner and Lauren Schuler-Donner have given up trying

Continued on page 20



# EVIL DRIVES A DEADLY BARGAIN

Nobody knows this better than Lucas Hyde and Sophie Cohen, two tough truckers who hear an eerie voice wailing for help on their CB. As they careen through a sinister Tennessee night, a curse as old as evil itself waits to consume them the instant they stop moving—and the gas gauge is pushing "empty."

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—Ed Gorman, author of *Night Kills*

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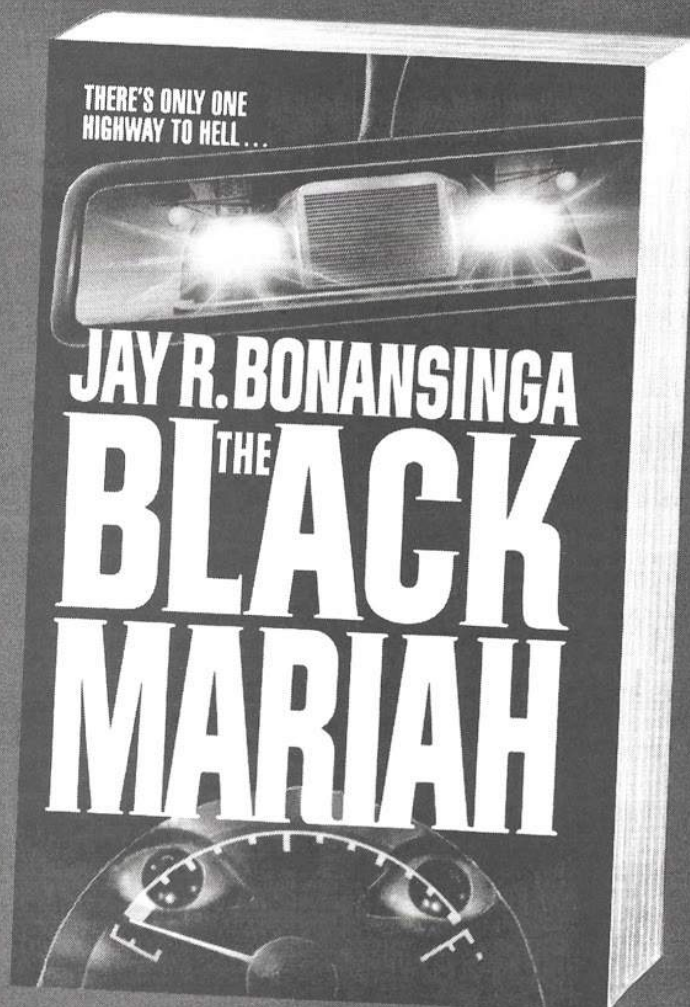
—T.E.D. Klein,  
author of *Ceremonies*

"A tense and wonderfully paced story that keeps you turning the pages."

—Graham Watkins,  
author of *Kaleidoscope Eyes*

"A wild ride through darkest voodoo and your very own soul, on board a fine, fast rig."

—Ron Dee, author of *Succumb*



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**A STAR IS BORN** (1937) Janet Gaynor, Frederic March. Everybody always praises this film, and we have no idea why. If you like to snicker at hammy movies, this is for you. Gaynor plays a young woman who is determined to become a star. She marries a famous actor (March), who hits the skids as she rises to stardom. We found an Eastman color print in the early stages of fading, but corrected it for this release. It's better than the bargain-basement copies of this that everyone else has. From 16mm. \$14.95

**OF HUMAN BONDAGE** (1934) Leslie Howard, Bette Davis. You've probably seen the '40s remake, but this version is pretty good, too. Howard plays a sensitive, club-footed doctor who falls for a cockney waitress (Davis). Of course, she marries someone else, and he becomes further obsessed with her. Lots of nice scenes, and some good acting, although Davis' accent is a bit shaky. From 16mm, print on the light side. \$14.95



HANS ALBERS IN *GOLD*

**FP-1 DOESN'T ANSWER** (1932) Hans Albers, Peter Lorre. This all German, non-subtitled film is one of the hardest to find Lorre titles in the U.S. This is NOT the English version with Conrad Veidt. It is an interesting tale of pre-WWII aircraft carriers. FP-1 is Floating Platform #1. \$14.95.

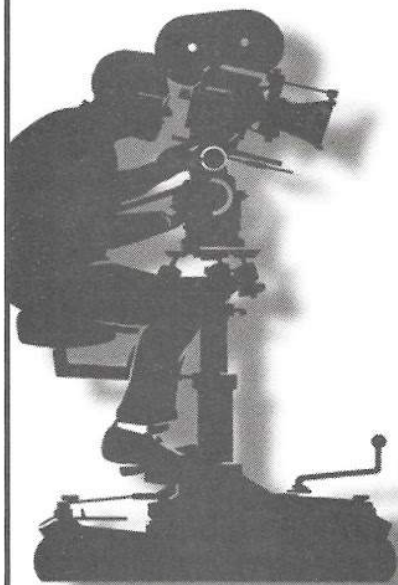
**GOLD** (1934) Brigitte Helm, Hans Albers. German, no subtitles. A rare film made after the heyday of German cinema, but by no means dull. Albers is a scientist looking for gold. Some outstanding lab scenes, rivaling anything from the Universal films. Portions of this were used in Curt Siodmak's *Magnetic Monster* (1953). \$11.95

**RARE WILLIS O'BRIEN FILMS** (1915-30)  
*The Dinosaur and the Missing Link* (1915)  
*Morpheus Mike* (1915)  
*Prehistoric Poultry* (1916)  
*R.F.D. 10,000 B.C.* (1916)  
*The Ghost of Slumber Mountain* (1919)  
*Creation* (1931)

Enjoyable examples of early stop motion animation from the man who did the animation for *King Kong* (1933). All except *Ghost of Slumber Mountain* are from excellent 16mm prints. A steal at \$14.95!

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**THE RICHARD BOONE SHOW** (1963) Never heard of this show? It ran for one season after "Have Gun, Will Travel" ended. Boone got a bunch of actors together in a stock company and they produced a different play every week.

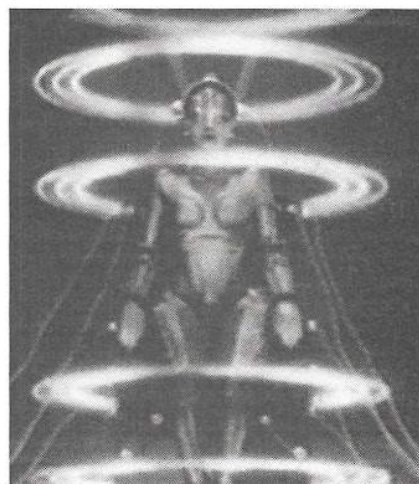
These are great shows, quite unlike most other programs. Here are two of them, both from very rare 16mm prints.

**The Mafia Man** - Boone plays a mobster who turns State's evidence to regain his son's respect. As he is flown under guard from Rome to New York, there are people trying to stop him.

**Welcome Home, Dan** - Warren Stevens plays a famous journalist who returns to his home town for a vacation. Only his mother knows the real reason he returned. Both episodes for \$14.95...

**THE PASSION OF JOAN OF ARC** (1928) Directed by Carl Dreyer. It's hard to find Dreyer's films (except *Vampyr* and *Day of Wrath*) but they are always worth seeing. Many critics have said that Renee Falconetti's performance is among the finest ever committed to film. Watch for the typical Dreyer touches with lighting and camerawork here. From a rare 16mm print. \$14.95

**WHITE ZOMBIE** (1932) Madge Bellamy. One of Lugosi's most-discussed films, this is a masterpiece of lighting and camerawork, often superior in technique to Universal's films. Lugosi is Legendre, zombie master, who is really interested in Madge Bellamy. Can her husband rescue her from the clutches of Legendre? A nice print. \$11.95



METROPOLIS

**METROPOLIS** (1926) Brigitte Helm, Klein-Rogge. Some people love this film, and others hate it, but no one can argue that it is one of the milestones of early s-f cinema. Lang's financial backing, UFA studios, eventually went bankrupt because this film never made its money back. Helm plays a member of the underground (literally) movement rebelling against the rich rulers of the futuristic city. This is a greatly influential film, affecting filmmakers even today. \$11.95

**A&C MEET FLOOR SWEEPINGS:** The newest in a long line of Floor Sweepings tapes. Contents include: *Ghost of Slumber Mountain* (1919), *Gertie the Dinosaur* (1909), about half an hour of bloopers, *Fresh Lobster* (1928), *By the Sun's Rays* (1914) with Lon Chaney, and many others. Just \$9.95

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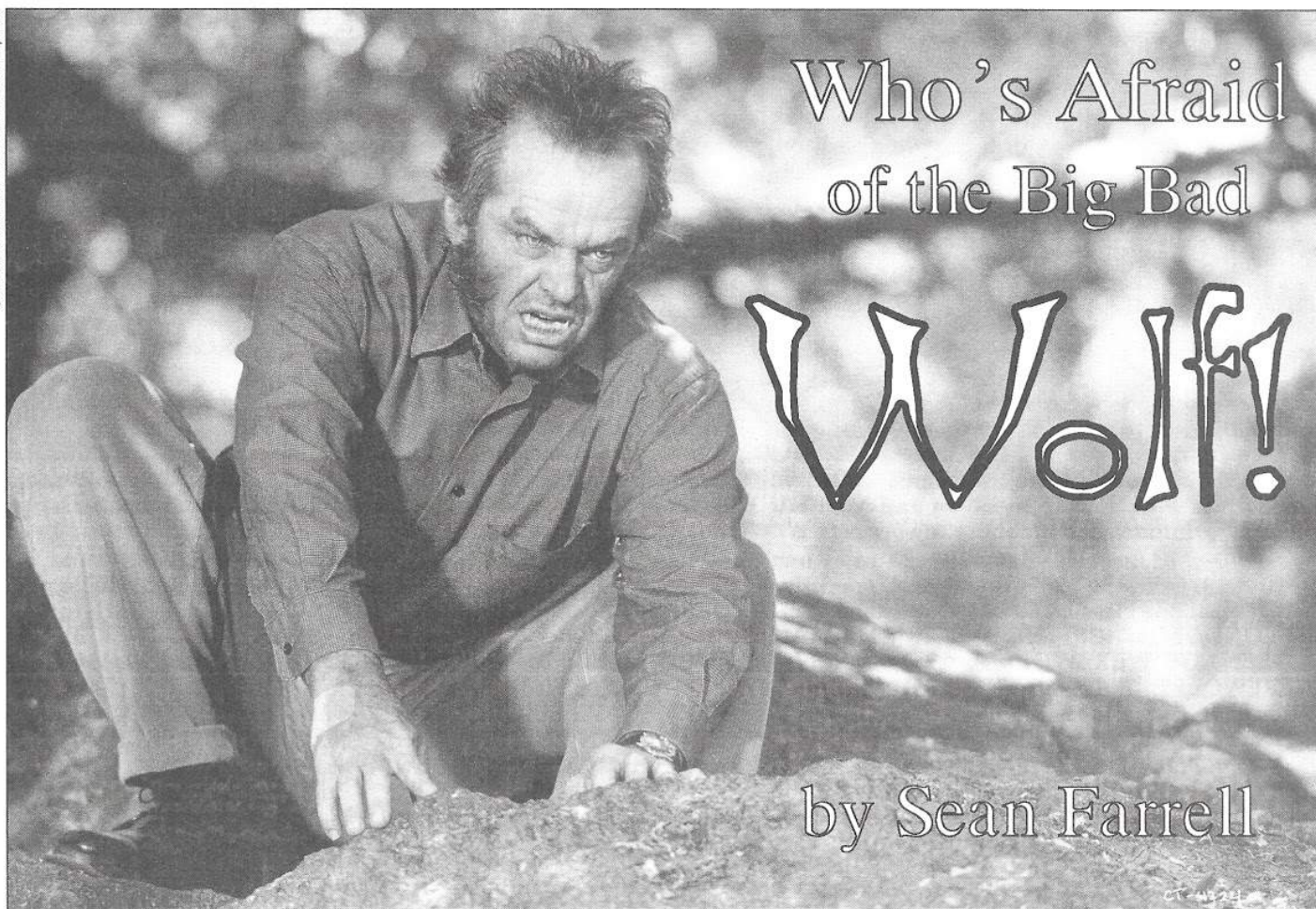
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*The wolf passed along something to me, a scrap of its spirit, in my blood or something. I don't know what it is. I'm just . . . different. More alive.*

—Jack Nicholson in *WOLF*

It seems that whenever the major players in Hollywood decide to make a film with horror trappings, such as *THE SILENCE OF THE LAMBS* (1991), the P.R. machine goes into overdrive to let everyone know that the movie in question is not a horror film. The latest example is Jack Nicholson's new "pet" project, *WOLF*.

Nicholson plays Will Randall, a Manhattan book editor whose life is changed in the most dramatic way during an encounter with a wolf on a lonely rural road one snowy night. Having been bitten on the wrist by the beast, poor Randall discovers that he is slowly changing into a wolf himself!

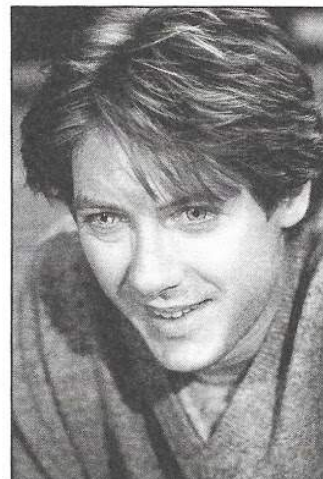
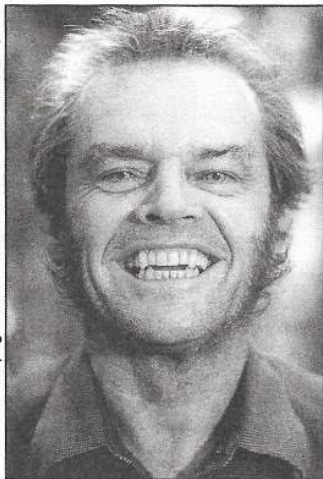
Though *WOLF* is clearly a werewolf tale, its A-list team of filmmakers are calling it everything but a horror film. As director Mike Nichols, whose previous teamings with Wolfman Jack resulted in *CARNAL KNOWLEDGE* (1971), *THE FORTUNE* (1975), and *HEARTBURN* (1986), explains, "I think of it as an adventure picture. It's the adventure of becoming something else and being empowered by all sorts of sensory increases and gifts and abilities you didn't have before, and, finally, the price that's paid for that—the great price. Certainly some of it is horror, but I hope more of it is adventure, and a journey into fantasy that may have a corollary in real life."

Working towards this subtle, nonhorror approach, makeup artist Rick Baker (1981's *AN AMERICAN WEREWOLF IN LONDON*; 1984's *GREYSTOKE: THE LEGEND OF TARZAN, LORD OF THE APES*) has designed a minimal "facial" for Nicholson's character. (Shades of 1935's *WEREWOLF OF LONDON*, whose star, Henry Hull, objected to the full werewolf makeup designed by Jack Pierce.) "Jack's full preparation time was only two hours," Baker said. "As Jack's face is already fairly angular, all he needed to sharpen his features was a rubber prosthesis at the top of his nose, between the eyes."

"I had an idea that I wanted to do for years," said Nicholson, whose genre credits go as far back as the original *LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS* in 1960, and include appearances in Corman's *THE RAVEN* (1963) and *THE TERROR* (1963), and Stanley Kubrick's *THE SHINING* (1980). "This was back before the new special effects revolution. I wanted to call it *WOLFMAN, NO MAKEUP*. I wanted to do these old-time tricks—you know, fall down behind the couch, come up with a beard, all that stuff." (For the star's first brush with lycanthropy, see next issue's interview with producer Herman Cohen.)

Nicholson is determined that *WOLF* put the wolf back in werewolf. "There is a specific classical mythology about this subject that we can't help but draw on, but most of the classic werewolf movies were made in the 1940s, where the sexual components had to be neutralized. The myth of the werewolf is a sexual myth: Eventually, he kills the one he loves."





**LEFT:** One of Hollywood's most famous "wolves" howls again in Mike Nichols' *WOLF*. **CENTER:** Werewolf meets Catwoman when Jack Nicholson and Michelle Pfeiffer spin a tale of lycanthropy. **RIGHT:** James Spader plays Stewart Swinton, a backstabbing coworker of Will Randall (Nicholson).

In fact, from the 1930s on, almost every decade has had at least one classic tale of lycanthropy: *WEREWOLF OF LONDON* in 1935, *THE WOLF MAN* in 1941, *I WAS A TEENAGE WEREWOLF* in 1957, *CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF* in 1961, and *THE HOWLING* in 1981. (The 1970s gave us the runts of the litter, including *THE BOY WHO CRIED WEREWOLF* and *WEREWOLF OF WASHINGTON*, both unleashed in 1973, and 1972's *THE RATS ARE COMING! THE WEREWOLVES ARE HERE!*)

Nicholson's costars include Michelle Pfeiffer (who once played, not a cat, but a Catwoman), James Spader (a

yuppie Ripper in 1988's *JACK'S BACK*), Kate Nelligan (a tasty morsel in 1979's *DRACULA*), and Christopher Plummer (Sherlock Holmes in 1979's *MURDER BY DECREE*). The original story is by novelist Jim Harrison, who shares the screenplay chores with Wesley Strick (1991's *CAPE FEAR*). Production designer Bo Welch is a *BATMAN RETURNS* veteran (as, of course, is Pfeiffer).

Columbia Pictures' executive reaction to the furry flick has been so positive that *WOLF*, originally set to howl in May, will now open during the potentially more lucrative summer season.

## NEWS HOUND

*Continued from page 16*

to film Anne Rice's *THE WITCHING HOUR* and turned their attention to those mighty mutants, the X-MEN.

Clive Barker's *Weaveworld* comes to Lifetime in an eight-hour coproduction with the BBC. Stephen King's novella *The Langoliers* arrives as an ABC miniseries this fall, as does *THE INVADERS*, coming in for a return landing on the Fox network. Fox will also write the concluding chapter to *ALIEN NATION*, in the form of a two-hour telefilm.

Other upcoming small-screen projects: another Spenser TV movie from Lifetime, starring Robert Urich as Robert Parker's Boston-based detective in *SPENSER: A SAVAGE PLACE . . .* Producer John Sacret Young (*CHINA BEACH*) is developing a mystery/adventure series set in Florida for CBS, entitled *THE KEYS . . .* Steven Spielberg's Amblin Productions and Universal TV are creating another series to join their continuing *SEAQUEST DSV*—*EARTH II*. NBC has ordered 22 episodes sight-unseen, costing a cool million per episode. The network fell into a similar trap . . . er, lucky deal with Spielberg on *DSV*.

The hound received some interesting info from a rabid fan of *THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN*. A long-censored episode of the George Reeves series is currently running intact on cable's Nick At Night. Moments in the 1951 episode *THE EVIL THREE*, including ghostly manifestations and a KISS OF DEATH style wheelchair stunt with an old lady being tossed into a basement, were deemed too horrific for many local stations to broadcast—but now they're back. Shocking in the 50s, but quaintly charming in the 90s.

*TALES OF THE CITY*, the funny, mysterious, intriguing PBS series that aired in January (see the last two *Scarlet* issues), garnered record ratings for the public TV network (at least in areas adult enough to run it). In San Francisco, the setting of Armistead Maupin's stories of the swinging 70s, the numbers went through the roof, with *TALES* beating all network programming on its first and final nights. The miniseries' producer, Britain's Channel Four, has a sequel in the works based on Maupin's second book. Interesting, isn't it, how UK producers often bring American culture to life better than we Yanks do?

Speaking of culture . . . hanging out at the local video store will be a little more thrilling this season. Already captured on videotape is *THE FUGITIVE*, starring Harrison Ford and Tommy Lee Jones. It's available from Warner Home Video at a list price of under \$25. Also awaiting you is the Full Moon computerized thriller *ARCADE*, featuring John De Lancie ("Q" from *STAR TREK*).

Coming to video in April: *MALICE*, starring Alec Baldwin and Nicole Kidman; *ROBOCOP 3* from Orion; Paramount's small-screen supernatural mystery *DYING TO REMEMBER*, with Melissa Gilbert; Ben Cross and Shannon Tweed in the erotic (naturally) thriller *COLD SWEAT*; and a gripping drama from Columbia Home Video starring Charles Napier, Michael J. Pollard, and swarms of killer mosquitoes—titled *SKEETER*, of course.

Among those irreplaceable icons whose final curtains fell: Joseph Cotten, Martin Kosleck, Bill Bixby, Claude Akins, Jeff Morrow, Cesar Romero, Leon Ames, Fritz Feld, John Candy, William Conrad, and the radiant Myrna Loy.





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Inspired by Lugosi's performance in the 1928 stage version of *Dracula*, she wrote *Countess Dracula* as a sequel. Now, 65 years later, MagicImage is proud to present this haunting story as well as a biography of Ms. Borland by Gregory Mank, detailing her life, her fascinating relationship with Bela Lugosi, and her performance in *Mark of the Vampire*. Also included are many rare photos and a forward by Forrest J Ackerman.

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# John Waters and Friends

## The director is back on the bad track with “Serial Mom”

Interview by  
Jessie Lilley

Pictured above is the All-American Sutphin family: dad Eugene (Sam Waterston) is a successful dentist, daughter Misty (Ricki Lake) is a college student with a passion for flea markets and boys, son Chip (Matthew Lillard) is a high school senior

with an insatiable appetite for horror movies, and mom Beverly (Kathleen Turner) is a serial killer . . .

Hey, listen, this is a John Waters movie! What were you expecting—THE ADVENTURES OF OZZIE AND HARRIET? THE DONNA REED SHOW? LEAVE IT TO BEAVER? THE BRADY BUNCH?

Not from the director who gave the world PINK FLAMINGOS (1974), FEMALE TROUBLE (1974), DESPER-

ATE LIVING (1977), POLYESTER (1981), HAIRSPRAY (1988), and CRY-BABY (1990).

Not from the man whose films star such a mixed bag of performers as Divine (pictured on page 21), Johnny Depp, Suzanne Somers, Mink Stole, Traci Lords, Joan Rivers, Troy Donahue, Joey Heatherton, Deborah Harry, Sonny Bono, Pia Zadora, Patty Hearst, and Ozzie and Harriet Nelson's own boy, David.



SERIAL MOM is destined to be a unique take on the institute of Motherhood, and Beverly Sutphin will doubtless join the ranks of movie-dom's great mommies.

Beverly is a cheery, lethal combination of Donna Stone, Lizzie Borden, and June Cleaver—with the accent definitely on the "cleaver". She'll do anything to insure her family's happiness, and before long some strange things start to happen in Mr. Waters' Neighborhood. Chip's teacher disappears after recommending therapy for the gore-obsessed teenager. Misty's boyfriend turns up dead after failing to keep a promise to call her. One of Dad's patients forgets to floss and . . .

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**Scarlet Street:** SERIAL MOM is, needless to say, a comedy.

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**SS:** You seem to have managed it well enough. You have quite a cast. Kathleen Turner . . .

**JW:** From the moment Kathleen stepped on the set—from our first meeting, really—she was SERIAL MOM. She understood the part perfectly. She understood something that I believe in: that everybody has this rage they walk around with. I think Kathleen had fun with that rage, which is something you don't usually get to do! In the film, Kathleen runs down the street with a butcher knife in six-inch heels and with complete confidence. (Laughs) The only person I ever knew who

could run in heels with as much confidence was Divine!

**SS:** The late, lamented Divine.

**JW:** He taught Ricki Lake how to walk in heels. Ricki had never in her life walked in them, and Divine had in 10 movies! (Laughs) In HAIR-SPRAY, when Ricki gets the whole makeover and comes out, Divine actually taught her.

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**SS:** How is Sam Waterston as a straight man?

**JW:** Well, a straight man is something I always have problems with in my films—but Sam was the perfect person to react to SERIAL MOM through the whole movie. He starts out thinking that anybody who commits murder should get the electric chair, and by the end of the movie he is trying to support his wife—who, as he says, "may have a few problems". (Laughs)

**SS:** Wonderful! Mink Stole is also in the cast.

**JW:** Oh, yeah; Mink's back. This is actually her biggest part in a long time. Mink has always been my favorite character actress; I mean, Mink was a character actress in my movies when she was 19 years old! I think my audience is very, very happy to see her have a big part. It's a reference point; they know her in my work, and I think it's her best part in a long time. Kathleen drives her insane, in a kind of comic way.

**SS:** We see you have a character called Mrs. Ackerman. That wouldn't be by way of acknowledging the editor of Famous Monsters of Filmland?

**JW:** I got those magazines as a kid, you know? But no—generally, when I think up names, I flashback to high school. I use yearbooks and books about what to name your baby. Of course, I mix the names up for legal reasons. Never is there a character in any of my films who has the first and last name of any real person.

**SS:** Of your films, one of our great favorites is POLYESTER.

**JW:** That just came out on laser disc, and

it looks beautiful! The Criterion Collection just released it with an odorama card!

**SS:** Oh, no! (Laughs)

**JW:** Yes! (Laughs) They have been extinct for quite some time.

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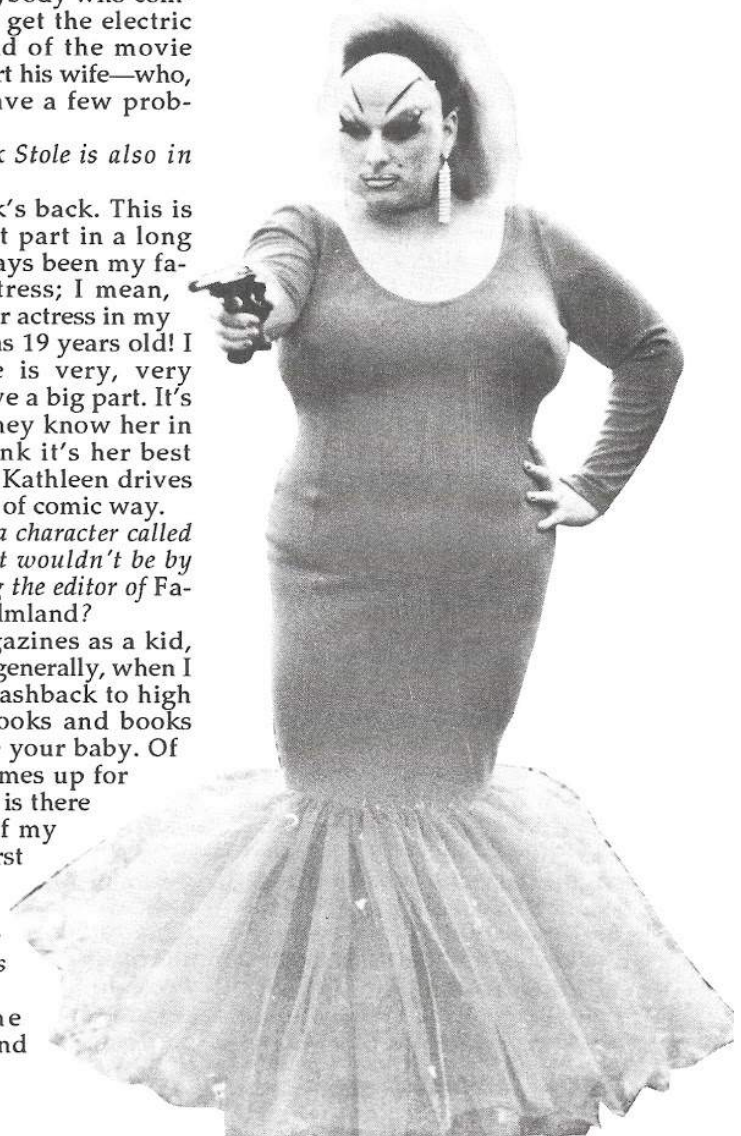
**JW:** And they still work! Even years later! If you ever notice a particular odor in your house, one that you can't get rid of, you'll eventually find that it's the odorama card! Tucked away in some drawer. Once again stinking up your life. (Laughs)

**SS:** You've moved from directing cult classics to mainstream films.

**JW:** My version of a mainstream film; let's put it that way!

**SS:** Do you feel you've had to compromise your vision?

**JW:** No, certainly not—especially on this movie. I'm back in R-rated territory, where I feel the most comfortable. If they agree to make a John Waters movie, they get one. The hard part is getting them to agree! It's a fight sometimes. I think any film-





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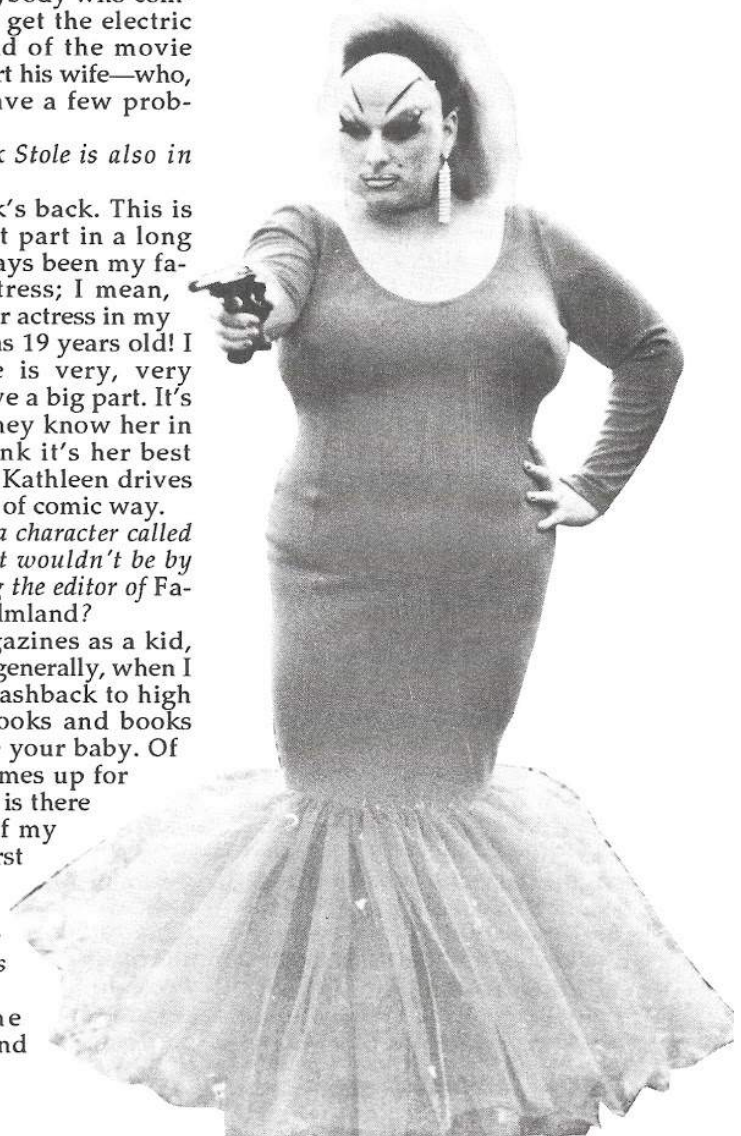
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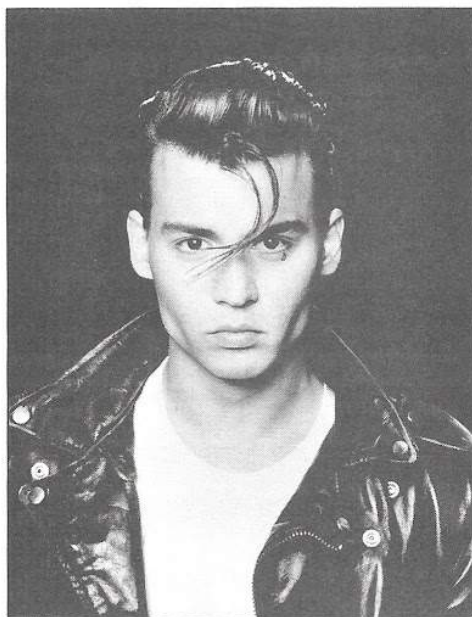
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**LEFT:** Johnny Depp traded in his teen idol image for a successful bid at movie stardom in John Waters' *CRY-BABY* (1990). Note the tattooed tear under Depp's left eye. **RIGHT:** *CRY-BABY*'s rebels without a clue included Kim McGuire (as Hatchet-Face), Darren E. Burrows, Johnny Depp, Ricki Lake, and Traci Lords.

maker who ends up getting the film he wants in the movie theater after the test screening process is a lucky man, and I have done that.

**SS:** You've worked with some wonderful actors and actresses from Hollywood's past. Tab Hunter . . .

**JW:** A wonderful man, a gentleman, and a completely good sport. And brave in a way. You'd be surprised at all the men who are uptight about their sexual identity, who'd turn down playing opposite Divine.

**SS:** And how about Divine?

**JW:** Divine was a wonderful friend, a good actor, and I miss him. We'd known each other since we were teenagers. It's a shame that, now, Robin Williams has the number one film in the country by wearing a dress—and when Divine wore one, they wouldn't even show it on the airlines. So, things have changed—but not really, because everyone knows Robin Williams has a wife!

**SS:** You mean Divine didn't have one stashed somewhere?

**JW:** No! (Laughs) A reporter asked me, "Wasn't Tom Hanks brave to do *PHILADELPHIA*?" I said, "I think he's great, but I don't think he's brave. I think a gay man playing the part would have been brave"—because everybody knows Tom Hanks is straight. It's not gonna hurt him. It's a stretch! What all actors win Oscars for—especially a gay actor playing it who you don't know is gay.

**SS:** Polly Bergen was in *CRY-BABY*.

**JW:** Polly Bergen was the best poker player I ever had on one of my mov-

ies! (Laughs) And a great, great lady, with a wonderful sense of humor.

**SS:** Troy Donahue?

**JW:** Troy was only there one or two days. He had a small part, but he loved playing a part where he was supposed to look ugly. I don't think he's ever had to play that before!

**SS:** David Nelson is a particular favorite of Scarlet Street's.

**JW:** I was more impressed by him than any celebrity that ever was on my set, because I grew up watching him. I just couldn't believe that he was sitting there with Patty Hearst and Traci Lords! (Laughs)

**SS:** Joey Heatherton?

**JW:** I wish her the very best in the world. I think she's sometimes on another planet, but she seems fine; she doesn't seem to have a problem with that. I like Joey. I read in the *New York Post* that she had her wallet stolen, and her response seemed very . . . appropriate, so I was glad to hear she was sounding fine! (Laughs)

**SS:** Pia Zadora?

**JW:** I may be the only director who got her great reviews in a movie! She should make movies again, I think. She was so horrified by that initial reaction to her first two movies that she was afraid to make any again. I mean, her music career is going great, but I wish she'd come back and be a movie star.

**SS:** You've also worked with some up and coming stars. Johnny Depp . . .

**JW:** Johnny? Well, he's not up and coming anymore! (Laughs)

**SS:** That's true! He came!

**JW:** He said to me in the beginning, "I hate being a teen idol." And I said, "Well, stick with us! We'll get rid of that!" (Laughs) And we did! I certainly think he's thought of as a very serious and good actor, now. Johnny is another complete gentleman who can play any type of character. I think Johnny will work his whole life; I think he has a successful, long career ahead of him. And he's really fun to hang out with.

**SS:** He had been a teen idol on *21 JUMP STREET*, and then . . .

**JW:** He did *CRY-BABY*, and by parodying being a teen idol, he sort of ended it. The best thing you can ever do, if you have some image and you want to change it, is to make fun of the image.

**SS:** Well, he went from playing a TV cop to a punk breaking out of jail in his jockey shorts.

**JW:** He knew that I wouldn't do anything too hideous, and we had two pair on him—it was very carefully arranged. (Laughs) You couldn't see anything that he would regret showing—and it was a joke! It was another joke on being that kind of star. I mean, it was so ridiculous that his pants would fall off!

**SS:** Now he's playing Ed Wood . . .

**JW:** Johnny showed me a picture of himself in the dress, and he looked good, you know? Johnny looks good wearing any outfit! He can't look ugly. I mean, he invented grunge!

**SS:** He's developing a reputation for taking what are considered bizarre and eccentric roles.





**LEFT:** To err is human, to star in a John Waters movie—Divine! The late, great star of *PINK FLAMINGOS* (1974) and *FEMALE TROUBLE* (1974) is flanked by her *POLYESTER* (1981) director and costar, John Waters and Tab Hunter. **RIGHT:** What's a mother to do? Why, kill and maim, of course—just ask Kathleen Turner as *SERIAL MOM* (1994).



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**JW:** Johnny just wants to do movies that are good. He doesn't wanna play a cop in a Hollywood movie. I kid him and tell him, "You'd better soon!" (Laughs) Just to make him crazy. But I think he just wants to pick roles and movies and directors that are interesting.

**SS:** Tell us about Ricki Lake.

**JW:** Ricki! God! She's so amazing. She's on the cover of the *Hollywood Reporter*! She's doing great, and it's exciting for me. I must admit, daytime TV is something that I never watch. I've watched Ricki, though. I'm amazed at those shows! I mean, people go on and say all that stuff! I mean, don't they have friends? (Laughs)

**SS:** Here's another name: Traci Lords.

**JW:** Traci is doing very well for herself. She's making lots of films. She was in an NBC miniseries. I mean, she's broken lots of taboos of hiring somebody with her past. Traci's very, very ambitious. She's taken all that negative energy from her youth—actually, from her childhood—and put it into working out here in Hollywood. I love Traci. I mean, I kid her, 'cause men react like she's a terrorist! Men are really scared when they see Traci Lords.

**SS:** When you cast a role in one of your films, what do you look for?

**JW:** Well, I write them, so the whole time I'm writing them, I'm playing every single character myself. I look for somebody to play it the way I've always imagined it. Sometimes I change. Somebody can give me a

reading that's different and I like that, too. But I guess I look for somebody who understands the humor of it and can play comedy. I almost never hire comedians to do comedy; that doesn't work for me. I always direct them to play the movie as if they believe every word of it. I make satires, and the best way to do that is to play it straight.

**SS:** You've cast some very interesting nonactors in your films, including Patty Hearst.

**JW:** Well, consider what Patty went through in her life. She can act! (Laughs) Patty has a very interesting screen presence. She has a part in *SERIAL MOM*. I would never offer her a role that would be rude to offer, if you know what I'm saying?

**SS:** Nothing that would trade on her former notoriety.

**JW:** I think she's doing roles for me knowing that I really like her and think she's good, rather than just exploiting something that happened to her 20 years ago.

**SS:** How about Iggy Pop?

**JW:** Oh, I love Iggy! I grew up loving Iggy. I've always had a tradition of putting a music person in my films.

**SS:** You've also used Joe Dallesandro.

**JW:** Well, Joe! Are you kidding? Underground movies! The Warhol films, which were certainly a big influence on me growing up in Baltimore. He was the Clark Gable, really, of the underground movement. And he still looks great, you know? We had him playing a priest because I thought that was a—well . . .

**SS:** Stretch?

**JW:** I also used Brigitte Berlin, who worked with Andy Warhol years ago, in my new movie. I like putting one of them in, you know? I never would have before Andy died, because it would be like poaching! (Laughs)

**SS:** We'd be remiss if we failed to mention Sonny Bono.

**JW:** Sonny Bono? Our future president? He was a little nervous to do my movie, because he hadn't heard of me. He asked people who worked in his restaurant, and they said, "Oh! Yeah! Make his movie!" (Laughs) I think he was even more uptight when he got a very positive response—but he didn't quite get why. He kept saying, "You're not gonna sneak anything in this script?" But Sonny, I think he's great—except I never can give him money for his campaign, because he's for the death penalty and I'm not. Otherwise, I'm very much for him.

**SS:** *SERIAL MOM* was filmed in Baltimore, wasn't it?

**JW:** I always film them in Baltimore. I figure it would be bad luck to film somewhere else. (Laughs)

**SS:** It sounds like it's going to be quite a lot of fun.

**JW:** Well, I think *SERIAL MOM* delivers. *CRY-BABY* was a little timid for some of the people who like my films. This isn't.

**SS:** Not with six-inch heels and a butcher knife!

**JW:** Right. That's a fashion statement for the 90s.



# OFF THEIR ROCKER THE MANY FACES OF PSYCHO'S MRS. BATES



BY ROBERT M. PRICE





Maternal images: Norman (played by a stand-in for Anthony Perkins) as Mother (LEFT) and Mother as Mother (RIGHT) in Alfred Hitchcock's *PSYCHO* (1960), adapted from the ground-breaking novel by Robert Bloch.

The image of the mother has always been a powerful one, full of ambiguous and self-contradictory associations. No doubt this fact stems from our experiences of our moms as dispensers both of comfort and of punishment. The result is a Collective Unconscious that casts up myths of Durga, Kali, Medea, and others who are love objects even as they clutch severed human heads streaming gore. Bound up in all this, too, is the Oedipus complex, which blurs the lines between romantic and maternal love. The most powerful American myth to emerge, dripping blood, from this matrix is undoubtedly *PSYCHO*, both the series of novels by Robert Bloch and the series of films, which follow a trajectory different from the original book.

Mrs. Bates appears "on stage" as a character in only a single one of these films, the TV movie *PSYCHO IV* (1990). Olivia Hussey had at least as great a challenge living up to the role of the mythic mother here as she had in portraying Mary, the mother of Jesus, in *JESUS OF NAZARETH* (1977). She did a good enough job of it, and what complaints we have must be levelled instead at screenwriter Joseph Stefano. We had always been led to picture Norman's mother as an old widow who, in fact, could be imagined as being at home in ornate Victorian surroundings and dressed as a granny. But here is the voluptuous Hussey impersonating her!

The confusion resulted from Stefano's (or Hitchcock's) original decision to take some 20 years off the age of Bloch's middle-aged Norman Bates. Bloch had pictured him as a kind of Cliff Clavin (*CHEERS*' postal worker) pushed over the edge. ("Yeah, I was breast-fed longer than most youngsters . . . uh . . . infants . . .") Once Norman (Anthony Perkins) had to be in his 20s in 1960, Mother's chronology was all askew, too.

Because *PSYCHO IV* implicitly takes place in 1990 (as the call-in-shrink-show premise implies), we now have to place Mrs. Bates as sexually active in 1960 or so, a member of the wrong generation, and prudish Victorian values will not so easily fit her. What was she doing in that house? She simply cannot be the imagined origin of the pinched, elderly voice we used to hear snapping "Norman!"

*Robert M. Price is the editor of Crypt of Cthulhu magazine and the author of Lin Carter: A Look Behind His Imaginary Worlds.*

And, strangely, we have already pinpointed the central dynamic of the role of Norman's "murderous" mother throughout the whole *PSYCHO* cycle, even including the dreadful TV pilot *BATES MOTEL* (1987): Norman's mother is not really a character at all, but precisely a role that is perilous to play. She is dead when the first film begins, though we don't know this right off. Throughout the four movies, what we see is the tragic and macabre spectacle of a series of ill-fated people balefully attracted, as if by the hypnotism of a cobra, to playing the role of Mother. Everyone who dares it comes to a bad end, as if Mother takes a kind of King Tut's Curse revenge—altogether appropriate, as she is herself a mummy.

In the first instance (1960's *PSYCHO*) it is Norman himself who has adopted the persona, played the role of Mother. Once he kills her, he cannot live with the trauma of parricide, and Oedipal jealousy draws Norman and Mother into the most intimate of embraces: She moves into a corner of his skull, symbolized by the cobwebbed fruit cellar. Whenever the stirrings of lust for a living woman wake in Norman, as they do with the arrival of Marion Crane (Janet Leigh) at the motel, Mother emerges to put a stop to it, watching out for Norman's interests better than he can be trusted to do himself. In Freudian terms, Mother has become Norman's oppressive superego; in Jungian terms, she has become his shadowy feminine side, his anima, alter ego, and superego.

But Norman's psychonecrophiliac union with Mom turns into tragedy, as Mother apparently takes over completely. At the end of the movie, Norman sits immobile in a chair, imagining himself the desiccated corpse in the fruit cellar who couldn't hurt a fly. We see the empty sockets of her skull peeking out from behind his eyes.

In *PSYCHO II* (1983), Norman has been cured. Mother has been exorcised, but that just means that her role is available again if anyone else should want it—and someone does. The movie can be seen as a contest over who will get to play the coveted role. Lyla and Mary Loomis (Vera Miles and Meg Tilly) share it for a time, working as a tag-team in a match against two opponents: one (Norman) who doesn't yet know what he is fighting for, and another (Miss Spool, played by Claudia Bryar) of whose presence in the contest Lyla and Mary are unaware.

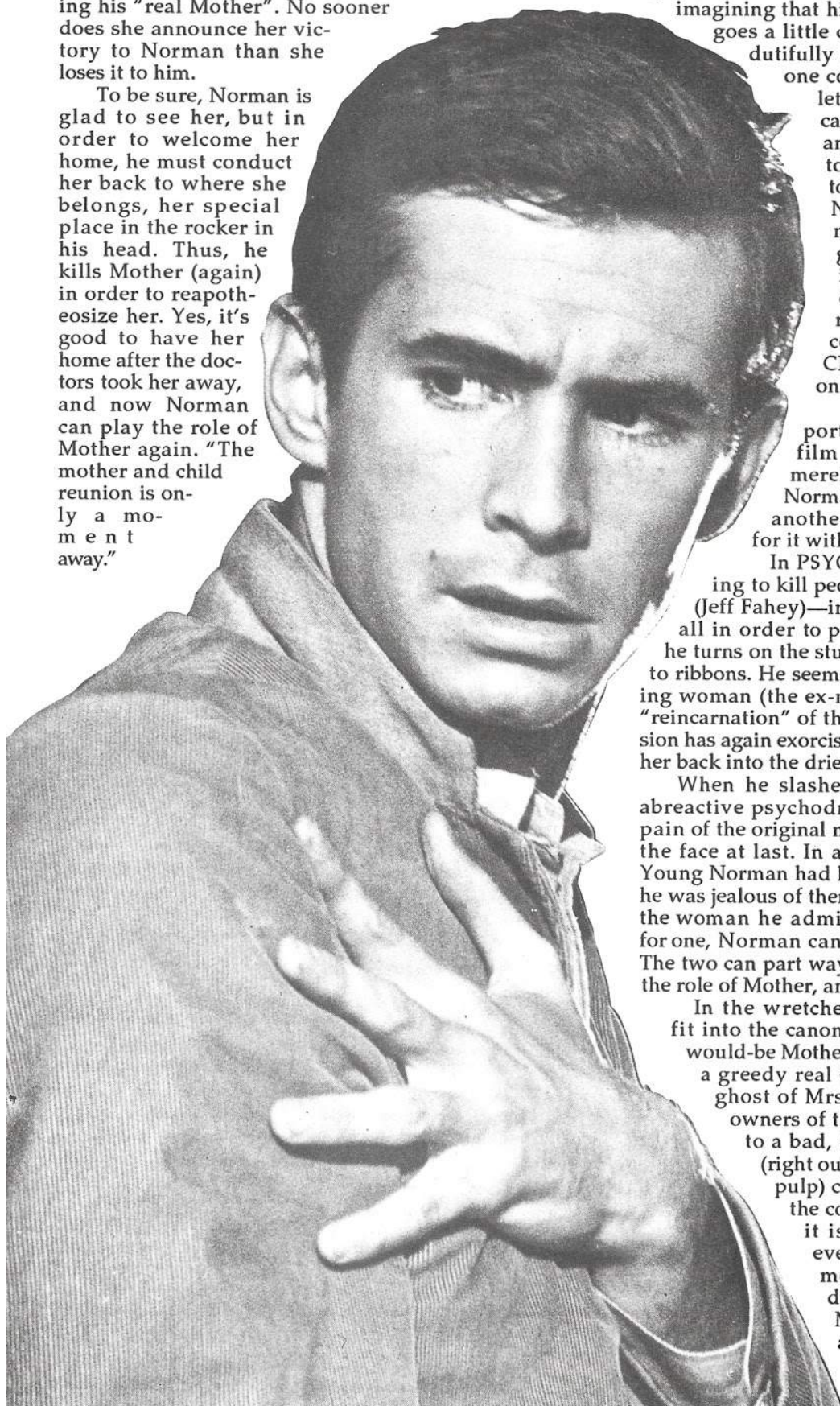
At length Mary turns against Lyla; the two compete as surrogate Mothers until both are dead, one the victim



of the vigilant Miss Spool ("When I saw what they were trying to do to my poor baby . . ."); the other, in full costume, knife aloft, shot down by the police.

This bizarre turn of events leaves the victorious team to turn on each other. Miss Spool reveals herself to Norman, who believes her claim of being his "real Mother". No sooner does she announce her victory to Norman than she loses it to him.

To be sure, Norman is glad to see her, but in order to welcome her home, he must conduct her back to where she belongs, her special place in the rocker in his head. Thus, he kills Mother (again) in order to reapotheosize her. Yes, it's good to have her home after the doctors took her away, and now Norman can play the role of Mother again. "The mother and child reunion is only a moment away."



There is an interesting difference between the film and Bloch's novel *Psycho II*. In the book, everyone seems to identify with Norman Bates; in the movie, it is Mother with whom everyone identifies.

In *PSYCHO III* (1986), we see Norman in full form again, oblivious to his own "true" identity, still blithely imagining that his mother is alive and that she "just goes a little crazy sometimes". Like Charon, he dutifully dispenses with the messy results. In one conversation with Mother, Norman lets slip a significant remark: "But you came back" from the dead. Miss Spool and the original Mother are the same to him. Whereas Emma Spool sought to explain in *PSYCHO II* that she, not Norma Bates, had been his biological mother, Norman seems to have forgotten it. In *PSYCHO III*, as far as he is concerned, she has risen from the dead. That was her in the coffin, all right, when they exhumed her to convince him she was dead in *PSYCHO II*, but when Miss Spool knocked on the kitchen door, she was back.

But we learn better. A snooping reporter (Roberta Maxwell) in the third film discovers that poor Emma Spool merely harbored delusions of being Norman's Mother. She, too, was merely another Mother-wanna-be, and she paid for it with her life.

In *PSYCHO III*, Norman has become willing to kill people—specifically, the drifter Duke (Jeff Fahey)—in his own right, not as Mrs. Bates, all in order to protect Mother, but at the last minute he turns on the stuffed effigy of Mother and slashes it to ribbons. He seems to have admitted his love for a living woman (the ex-nun, played by Diana Scarwid as a "reincarnation" of the Janet Leigh character); this decision has again exorcised Mother from his mind and driven her back into the dried-up husk in the rocking chair.

When he slashes her, Norman is undergoing an abreactive psychodrama, reliving and embracing the pain of the original matricide, and so looking his guilt in the face at last. In a strange way the score is evened: Young Norman had killed Mother and her lover because he was jealous of them. Now (he imagines) she has killed the woman he admits he loves, and with the score one for one, Norman can admit and "own" his hatred for her. The two can part ways at last. Norman finally renounces the role of Mother, and there is no one else to take it.

In the wretched *BATES MOTEL*, which does not fit into the canonical sequence, we do have another would-be Mother, but this one is nothing more than a greedy real estate developer who poses as the ghost of Mrs. Bates in order to scare away the owners of the reopened motel. He, too, comes to a bad, though mundane, end; his scheme (right out of a TV sitcom or a "Weird Menace" pulp) comes to naught and he is nabbed by the cops. Too bad: This scene, as poor as it is, is the only piece of the movie even reminiscent of *PSYCHO*. (The TV movie was itself recapitulating the doomed attempts to impersonate Mother, or in this case to impersonate the *PSYCHO* movies.)





Mrs. Bates was pushing up daisies in *PSYCHO II* (1983), but such motherly substitutes as Mary Loomis (Meg Tilly, pictured LEFT with Anthony Perkins) and Lyla Loomis (Vera Miles, ABOVE) were in abundance. Miles was repeating her role from the Alfred Hitchcock original, the only cast member other than Perkins to do so. BELOW: A gangly Henry Thomas as the young Norman Bates in *PSYCHO IV: THE BEGINNING* (1990).

by virtue of her inconsistent, positively sexual behavior, she has forfeited the role of "Mother", now rigidly defined by the superego "Mother" who has been firmly installed in young Norman's head.

It is not the murder that causes the transference of Mother into Norman's head; rather, it's the latter that causes the former! (What we should have heard, as Norman prepared the poison, was the bitter whisper of the familiar elderly voice: "Kill that slut!") Norma makes the fatal error of renouncing the role of Mother and

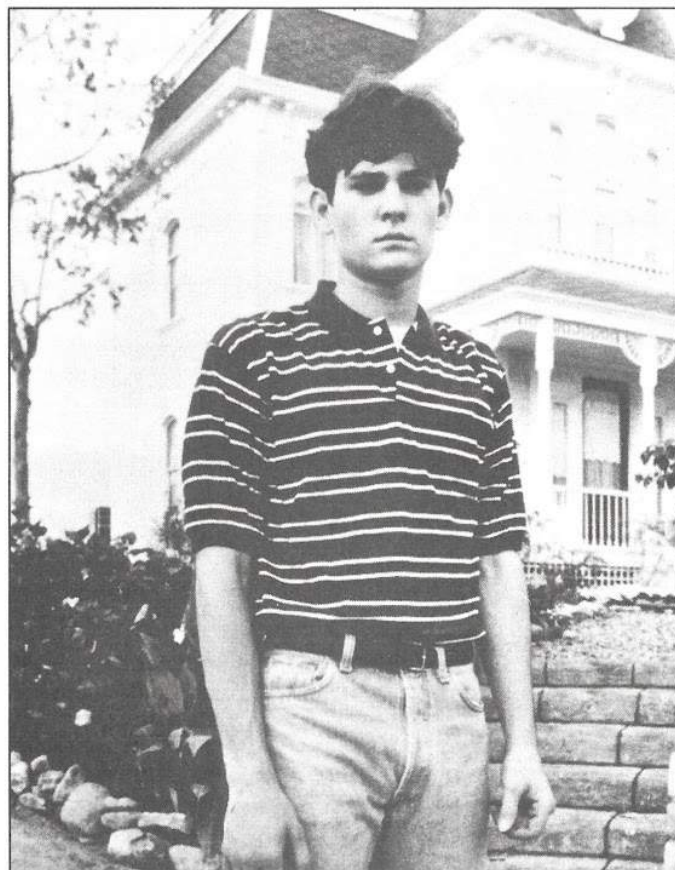
The real fourth installment, another TV movie, *PSYCHO IV* (1990), continues the same theme, albeit more subtly. Here, Norman, still sane, is nonetheless planning to kill again. Wife Connie (Donna Mitchell) is pregnant, and he is terrified that the baby will one day become another Norman with all of his quirks. He cannot chance unleashing another Norman on the world.

The subtext of the film is more clever than the plot, because Norman has already unleashed a new, young Norman Bates to kill again as he recounts the long flashback in which Henry Thomas plays the adolescent Norman. (In effect, he has already begotten the monstrous "Son of Norman Bates" he fears!)

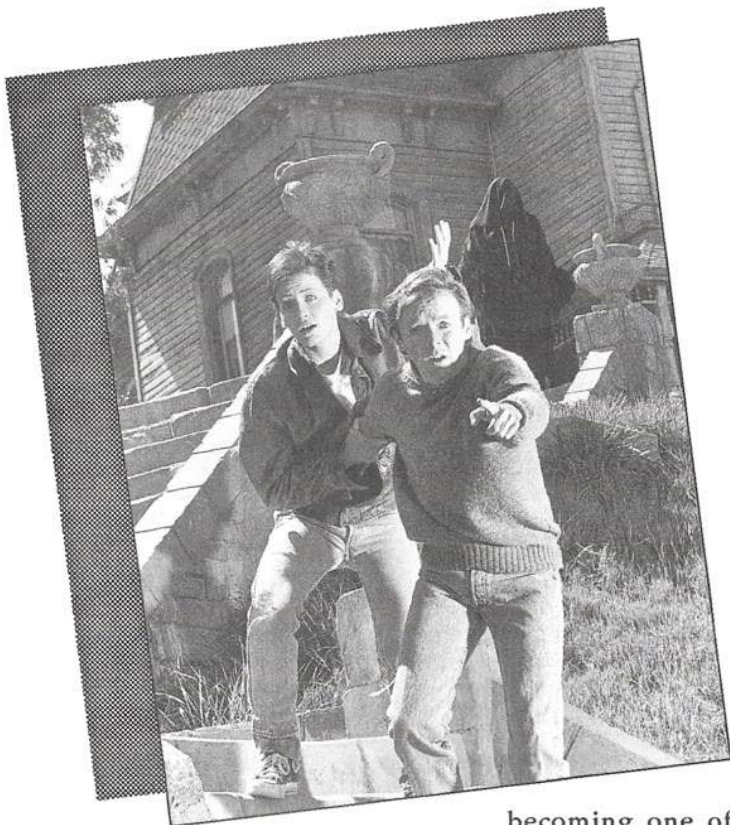
On the literal level, he means to kill his wife to forestall the unholy birth, but what he is really doing is preventing his wife from becoming another Mother! If Norman Junior should become another monster, replaying the same scenario, he would need his own corresponding Mother, and that would be Norman Senior's wife. Hence Norman lifts the knife to deny her the deadly role.

The denial, of course, is as deadly as the role would have been. His wife talks him out of it—yet, at the film's end, do we not hear the whispers of Mother's voice lingering in the flaming pile of the Bates house? If so, the role is deadly for the house, for it burns like the witch who haunts it.

The most striking aspect of *PSYCHO IV* in terms of our question of "Who will get to be Mother?" concerns the murder of Norman's flesh-and-blood mother and her boyfriend (Warren Frost). Though it is never stated as such, it is clear that Norman murders Norma because,







**LEFT:** Bud holds Cort in the execrable BATES MOTEL (1987). **BELOW and NEXT PAGE:** PSYCHO IV: THE BEGINNING (1990) was really the end.

down into its most fundamental events, character types, and turns of plot, and then grouping the similar features together.

One would find them repeated. In different outward circumstances and wearing different character names, the same "mythemes", the same basic elements of the myth, would be repeated again and again. It doesn't even matter, Levi-Strauss said, whether you are using an early or a later version of the myth: Its inner logic will continue to work like DNA to keep the myth, in all its ever-new forms, engaged with the same deep questions. PSYCHO is a modern myth; as such, it is susceptible to structuralist analysis.

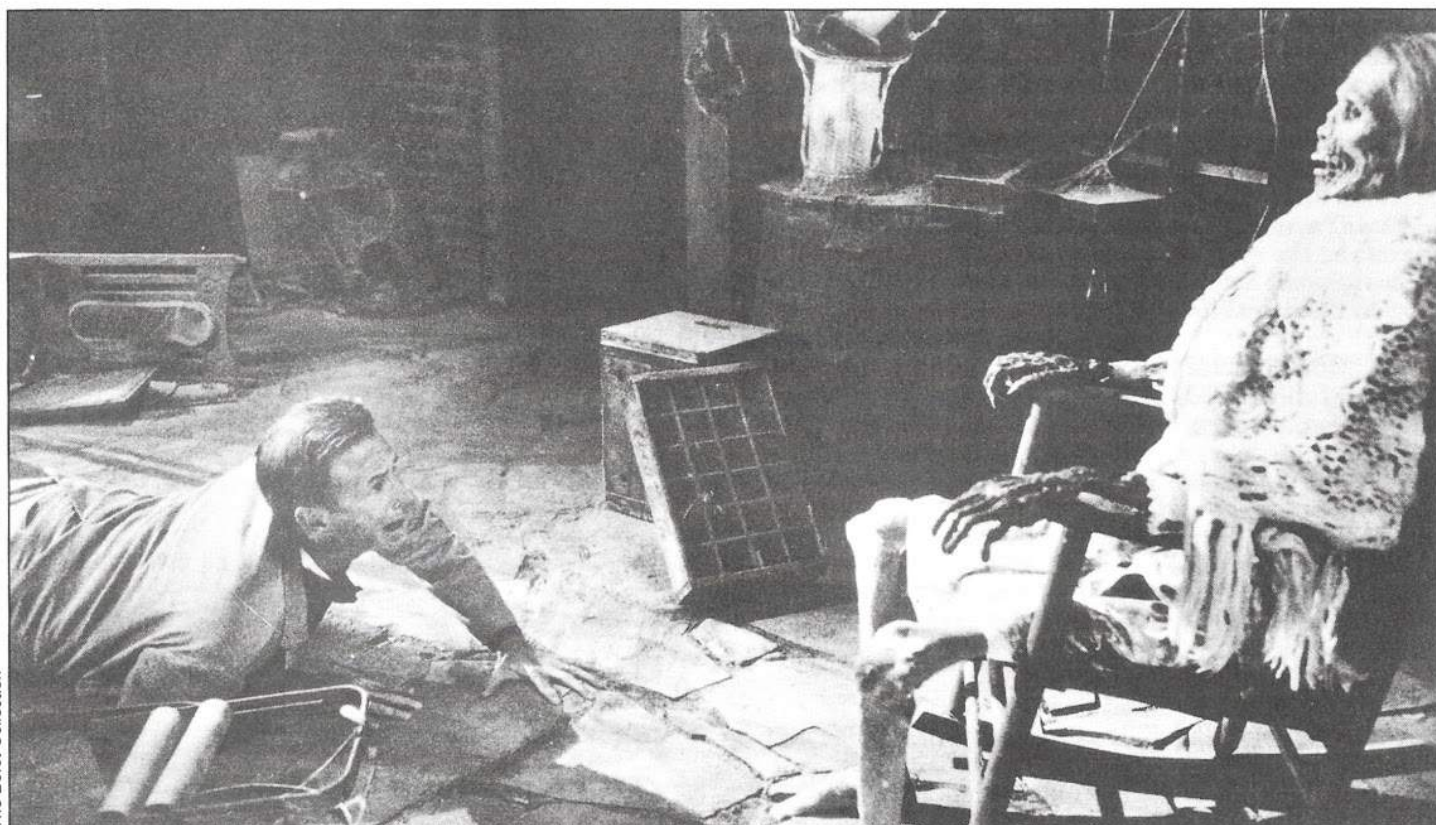
It is worth noting that the movies have only the most superficial element of temporal sequence. PSYCHO IV seems to be intended as a direct sequel to the original PSYCHO, with no reference to PSYCHO II or III. Norman may have been healed and released from his first confinement, not from the confinement that takes place at the end of PSYCHO III.

PSYCHO IV also drifts back and forth from flashback to present reality, as if the flashback, not a genuine memory or even a genuine past, were as much a part of the new narrative as the frame sequence. Both the frame story and the flashback story are being told for the first time. It is as if we were simply cutting between two scenes of simultaneous action. (Indeed, we are doing just that.)

It is essentially the same as an episode of the old TIME TUNNEL television program: Even though the characters go back into the past, the adventures they have there are new because of their presence. The supposed past events in PSYCHO IV are really only events in the

becoming one of the "whores", i.e., real live women. Every other woman in the PSYCHO movies dies when she dares adopt the role of Mother. Mother herself dies when she stops playing that role, which is hers by right.

Anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss pioneered the method of structuralist analysis. Levi-Strauss said that one finds out what a myth is really about, what conflict deep inside its hearers and tellers it seeks to resolve, by disregarding narrative sequence and breaking the myth





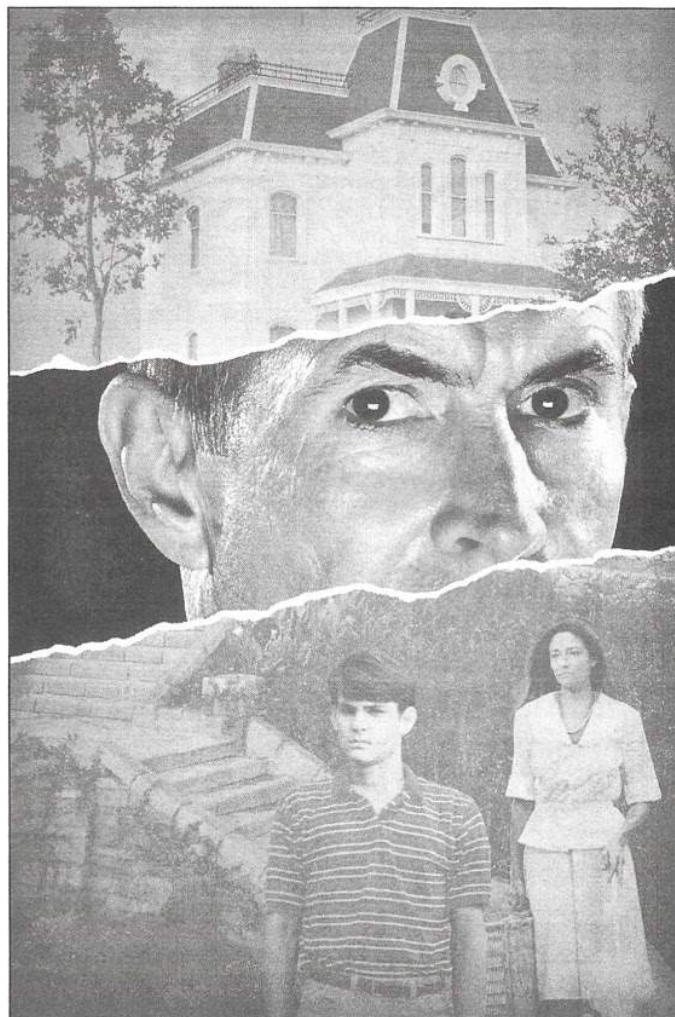
present narrative, nothing else, as if Norman were making it up as he went along.

Likewise, in *PSYCHO III*, despite references to the previous film, we really seem to be seeing episodes before the first film. We are getting an answer to the questions lingering from *PSYCHO*: What the hell must have been going on in that house with that dreadfully twisted young man and that, ahem, corpse?

It seems that all the different *PSYCHO*s drift into and out of one another. There is no real sequence. All are variant versions of the same myth. The deep conflict being rehearsed and resolved in these movies is that of the Oedipal complex and which pole of it will triumph to dominate one's life: Will a man so identify with his mother, whether tyrannical or nurturing, that all women are stand-ins for her? ("I want a girl just like the girl that married dear old Dad.") Or will he identify with his mother even more strongly, so that no other woman is able to substitute for her?

If the former is the case, the man may find a mate who will either suffer from the comparison or be blamed for the problems in the man created by his mother. Or there may be a good match, and he will never be able to draw the line between the wife as a lover and as second mother, and it will not matter. If the latter is the case, the man will remain without female companionship and live a lonely (and nerdish) life. In this case, Norman Bates does stand for the Cliff Clavins of the world.

The *PSYCHO* films depict the trials of a man trying to move from the second scenario to the first, as he goes back and forth between falling in love with Marion Crane or Mary Loomis and hearing Mother order him to "Get rid of that slut!" The female victims of Mother, as well as the various women who try unsuccessfully to assume the role of Mother, all symbolize the women who seek to relate romantically to such men. The odds are against them, even if they seem to win.



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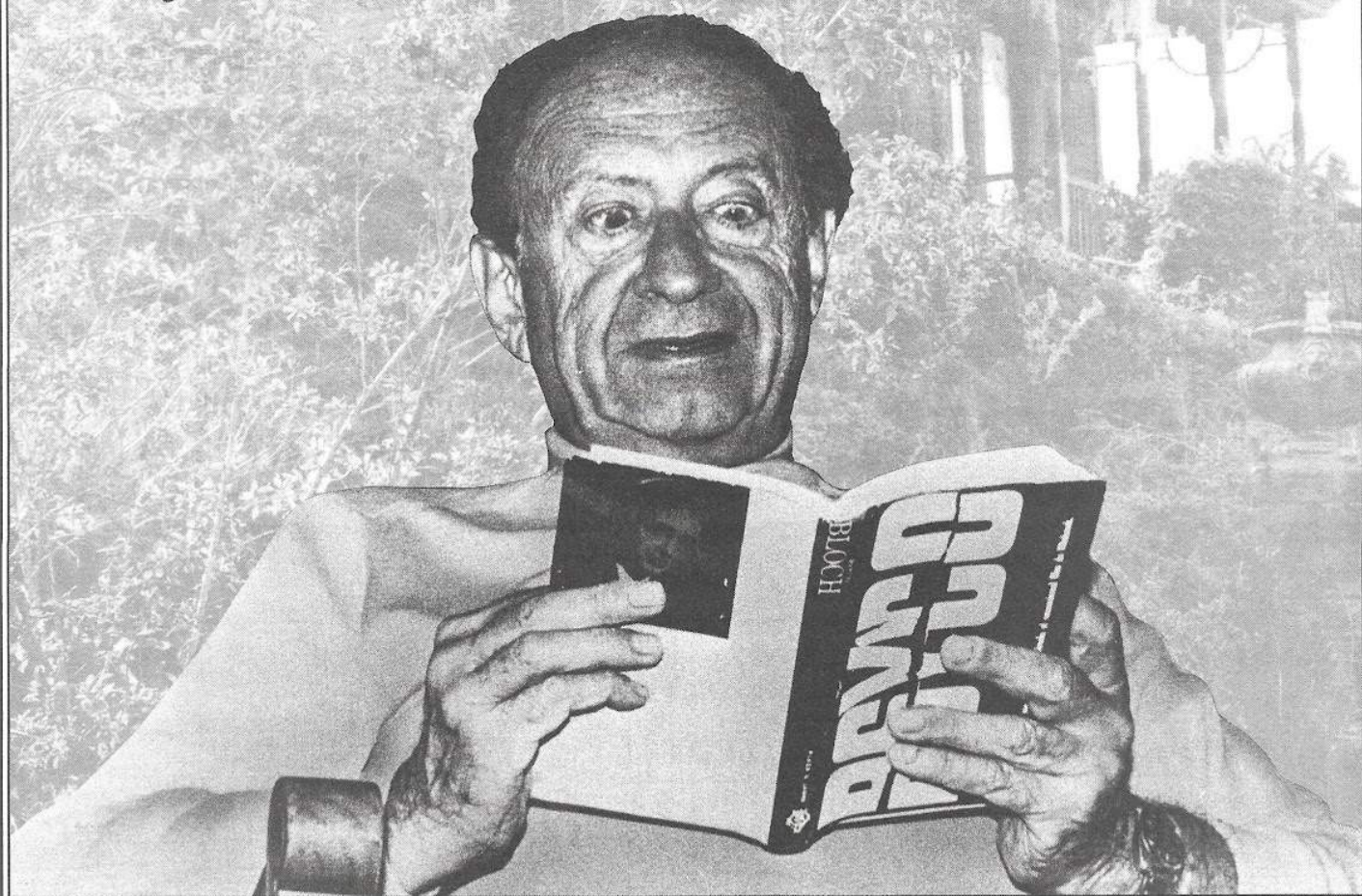
# ROBERT BLOCH

INTERVIEWED BY KEVIN G. SHINNICK

He's the man who made millions think twice about showering! The man who collected Poe! Yes, he's Yours Truly, Robert Bloch, author of *Psycho*, creator of Norman Bates, and architect of that showplace of the nation—the Bates Motel!

Robert Bloch wrote for the classic pulp magazine *Weird Tales*, corresponded with H. P. Lovecraft, and saw his own classic tales—including the chilling "Yours Truly, Jack the Ripper"—adapted for radio and television. For the movies, he wrote the screenplays for such films as *STRAIT-JACKET* (1964), *THE NIGHT WALKER* (1964), *THE PSYCHOPATH* (1966), *TORTURE GARDEN* (1968), and *THE HOUSE THAT DRIPPED BLOOD* (1971).

*Scarlet Street* is pleased to welcome to our pages the wise, witty, and just a wee bit gruesome . . . Robert Bloch!





*Scarlet Street: You sold your first story in the 1930s, didn't you?*

**Robert Bloch:** In 1934. Published in December 1934, in the January 1935 issue of *Weird Tales*.

**SS:** *Is that what prompted you to pursue a career as a writer?*

**RB:** I would say my principal motivation was called hunger! In those days, we were in the midst of the Great Depression. You couldn't get a job without experience, you couldn't get experience without a job, and if you graduated from high school you were a nonperson. It was exactly the opposite of today's situation: The older generation and the elderly were taking all the jobs to support families and themselves, in competition with young people, who were considered second-class citizens, really. Young people lacked the experience; except in cases of employment that involved manual labor, they had a rougher time finding work. Today the converse is true; the older people are the ones that are having the problems.

**SS:** *At the time, you were corresponding with H. P. Lovecraft. Like Lovecraft, your early work was supernatural in tone—which is not true of your later writing.*

**RB:** It was, because the market for the supernatural was there in *Weird Tales* magazine. I felt comfortable with that stuff, because I had read so much in that genre.

**SS:** *Later, though, you switched to psychological horror.*

**RB:** I felt that the supernatural was a subject that has been almost exhausted. It was merely a matter of reworking the familiar legends and the familiar plots. Abnormal patterns of behavior were more mysterious and in some cases more frightening than something that required a supernatural or fantastic explanation.

**SS:** *Did this lead to your interest in Jack the Ripper?*

**RB:** I wrote my Jack the Ripper story in 1943, before I had begun to switch over. What I had started to do was to adapt my style and write in a more realistic fashion and set most of my stories against familiar backgrounds in present time. If I dragged in a supernatural element, that was a little more effective. It was presented as something that was possible here and now.

**SS:** *"Yours Truly, Jack the Ripper" got you into radio.*

**RB:** Yes, it did. But that's a matter of fortuitous circumstance, as is most

everything that's of importance in a person's career or life. I wrote the story. It appeared in *Weird Tales* in July 1943, and it happened that 20th Century Fox was doing a film version of Mrs. Belloc Lowndes' novel *The Lodger*—which was about the Ripper and was going to star Laird Cregar. It was his first starring role; they wanted to publicize it, and in the absence of talk shows in those days, they were trying to present actors in something that might be vaguely connected with the sort of thing they were doing on screen. Somebody read the story and said, "That's it!" They bought



Portrait of the Artist as a (Very) Young Man

the story and adapted it, and Laird Cregar played the role on THE KATE SMITH HOUR, which was one of the top-rated shows in terms of large prime-time audience. From that, the story was picked up for inclusion in an anthology, which was a very rare thing; there had been only three or four anthologies of supernatural stories in a decade in the United States. So, I was in hardcover in an anthology, which was something that my contemporaries were not fortunate enough to share. Once this anthology was circulated, the next step was an appearance in paperback. Then it got into other editions, and other countries, and a couple of collections that I did—and, as of now, that little short story has been printed and reprinted at least 50 times around the world. It's been done three or four times on radio, it's been done on television,

it's borne a charmed life for what is now over 50 years.

**SS:** *Is there any one adaptation that was better than the rest?*

**RB:** When it comes to radio or television versions, I don't think that I could pick out one, because it's so long since I've seen or heard any of them. They all tend to blur together. The only things that are distinctive in my mind may be title changes in various other languages.

**SS:** *The Ripper story led to a radio program, which is now lost, called STAY TUNED FOR TERROR.*

**RB:** I did my own version of it on that show, which was sort of a spin-off of *Weird Tales*, from which I adapted 39 of my stories for radio. That was my series, nobody else's. It was a syndication show that was aired throughout the United States, in Hawaii, and on Canadian Broadcasting. "The Ripper" was one of the stories.

**SS:** *Were you involved in all phases of the show?*

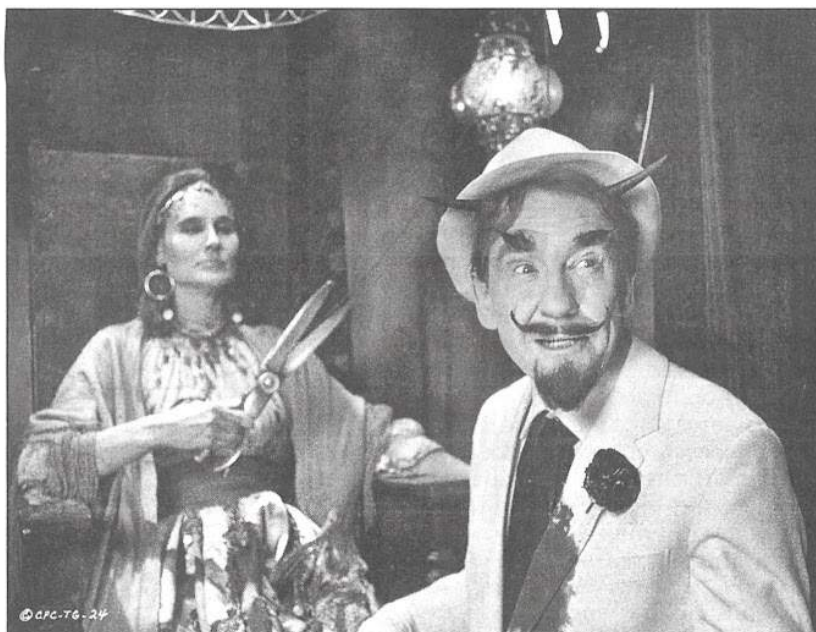
**RB:** I selected the musical accompaniment. I had input in regards to the casting of the regular players. And then I sat behind the shoulder of the producer of the show, and the director, who, by the way, had formerly directed LIGHTS OUT. His name was Howard Keegan; he directed all 39 episodes. It gave me an opportunity to learn a little more about radio, and since I was writing a great deal of radio advertising copy and commercial spots, it helped.

**SS:** *These shows were lost because of the death of the producer.*

**RB:** The producer, Berle Adams, was also a sportscaster; he covered the major football games throughout the country and piloted his own plane. He did so for a Thanksgiving game, I think, in New Orleans, started to fly back to Chicago, and the plane crashed. Any expectation for a second season for the show crashed with him. Already arranged was a deal to do at least six episodes on regular phonograph records as an album. Two weeks after the producer died, Brunswick Records declared bankruptcy and never made any further pressings. It's strange—but again, as I said in regard to how "The Ripper" came into such prominence, which was accidental, these things were accidental. Much of one's life is governed by things beyond one's personal control.

**SS:** *So, you went back to writing psychological horror novels?*





LEFT: Alfred Hitchcock may look "board", but he perked up when millions began to "clap" for *PSYCHO* (1960). RIGHT: Burgess Meredith had a helluva time as the devil in Robert Bloch's *TORTURE GARDEN* (1968).

RB: I really started to think seriously about doing them. Up to then, I'd yet to write a novel; I'd yet to do my first short-story collection. It came a year later—or later that same year.

SS: And this led to what is your most famous novel: *Psycho*, in 1959.

RB: The book was written in 1958, published in early '59, and plunked onto the screen in early 1960.

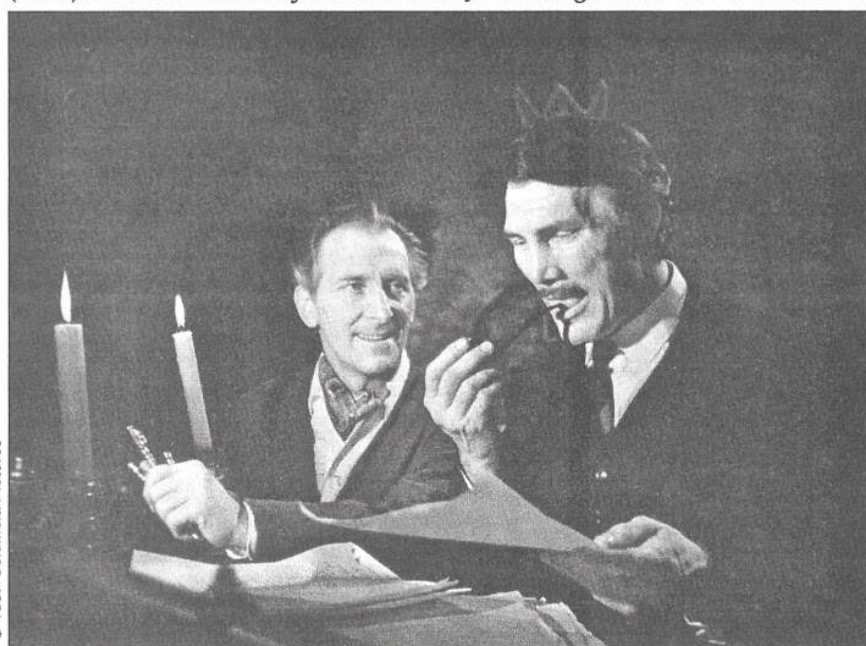
SS: It had its genesis in an actual murder case from 1954.

RB: That's what everybody says, although the actual case happened in

1957 in a small town in Wisconsin called Plainfield, 40 miles from where I was living. I never went there, because I didn't own a car. But I heard about it; I heard that there was a man who lived on a farm on the edge of this small town—a town similar to the one I was then living in—and he had killed a woman and hung her upside down in his shed, and that he had killed several other women, because he had a collection of portions of female anatomy in his home. But, that's as

far as it went, so he was not the inspiration. It was the circumstances of the case! I said, "How could anybody live in a town like the one he lives in, or the one I live in, and get away with murder and the neighbors never have any suspicions or find out?" Somebody like that could be a serial killer! In those days we had few serial killers in the United States, certainly few in the Midwest. So I said, "There's got to be a story here! There's got to be a book! But I have to figure out the answer to

LEFT: Peter Cushing and Jack Palance enlivened "The Man Who Collected Poe" segment of *TORTURE GARDEN* (1968). RIGHT: Anthony Perkins and Janet Leigh after the storm and before the shower in *PSYCHO* (1960).





my own question." Who could do this and how could he accomplish it? So gradually I built up this character. SS: *Norman Bates.*

RB: But the actual killer I had read about, Ed Gein, did not operate a motel, he didn't murder anybody in the shower, he didn't mummify his mother, he had no multiple personality problems—and it's debatable that he had any amnesia or amnesiac fugues which caused him to forget what he had done. Ed Gein in no way resembled Norman Bates. Norman Bates was somebody that I invented. I built his motel for him, installed his plumbing, and provided him with guests.

SS: *Ray Bradbury once commented that a writer is one who listens to ideas and finds the story in them.*

RB: I think that's a very, very wise observation—but only natural coming from somebody with Ray's talent and abilities.

SS: *He also said that one of the proudest moments in his life was when he first met you, in 1946, and you praised his work.*

RB: Well, we had only minimal contact before that. I had read his first stories in *Weird Tales*. He wrote me a couple of fan letters, I believe, even before he got published, so I was aware of the name, and very much impressed. My first opportunity to meet him was when I went out to a science-fiction convention on the west coast in 1946. The minute I got there, I said, "Where is Ray Bradbury?" He was across the room, and that was our first meeting. It's hard to believe. It's a long, long while ago—47 years, we've known one another. It's sort of a symbiotic relationship that writers in our genre have. I met Richard Matheson the first time on his honeymoon in 1952, at a convention. Two of our dearest mutual friends, Charles Beaumont and Fritz Leiber, are gone, of course. They were fine, talented writers in the field; they were very important in inspiring some of the younger writers of the present day who have risen to prominence. Again, it's timing! It's luck! When we were writing our early short stories and our novels, there was no great popular demand for them, no market, and certainly no astronomical incomes! Nobody was paying millions of dollars for scripts, or millions of dollars in book advances. We were just ahead of that era. So some of the people today are benefiting from the times in which they live. If you're born at the right time, everything works. If you're

born at the wrong time, forget it! God knows how many people have been neglected, ignored, or never noticed at all, because they weren't in the



right place at the right time. What would have happened to Elvis Presley if he'd been born in the era of Queen Victoria? What would have happened if Fred Astaire had been

born in 1950 instead of 1900? I'll tell you what would have happened to him: Today he'd be an over-the-hill aging chorus boy, that's all, because nobody provided starring roles for tap dancers in the 70s or 80s.

SS: *Is it true that you weren't aware that it was Alfred Hitchcock bidding on the film rights to Psycho?*

RB: That's quite correct. It was a blind bid. It was given to my agent in New York; I lived in Wisconsin, so, of course, I had to have an agent in New York, somebody who was knowledgeable about such things. So my knowledgeable agent had me sign a very ignorant sort of contract for this thing. (Laughs) I signed away all rights to sequels, to merchandising, to television, to theatrical presentations—literally millions of dollars! And that, again, is a fact of life. My agent certainly wasn't doing this out of any mean-spirited impulse on his part, because he stood to profit. The more money that he could receive from me, the better off he'd be, but he just didn't know. Nobody knew in those days, because there was no anticipation that something like that would ever happen—but it did, thanks to Hitchcock, and that's the way it is.

SS: *Joseph Stefano, who wrote the screenplay for PSYCHO, has claimed that he more than anyone is responsible for the success of the movie.*

RB: Well, let me give you a quote from a book called *The Celluloid Muse*: "PSYCHO all came from Robert Bloch's book. The screenwriter, Joseph Stefano, who was recommended to me by my agency, MCA, contributed dialogue mostly, no ideas." Alfred Hitchcock said that. In previous interviews, many years ago, before he began embarking on a career of such claims, Mr. Stefano did reveal the fact that his total time on the script amounted to six weeks. What he didn't seem to be aware of was the fact that the novel was going to survive as well as the screenplay. It's now appeared in at least 40 editions worldwide, and sold several million copies. Many people who thought that PSYCHO was written by Alfred Hitchcock were surprised when they read the novel to find out that they were reading what, in essence, became the film. Many people think that the book is the novelization of the film! Because there are so many such novelizations being made today, but back in those days it wasn't done with any frequency at all. I know several instances in recent years where Mr. Stefano had to



*"Paramount was very unhappy. They didn't like the title. 'Psycho? What does that mean? Who's gonna know that title? Who's gonna be able to pronounce it?' "*

be corrected—and was—by other people. But he still is very interested in claiming—or insinuating—that he had something to do with the creation of this concept.

SS: *Were you approached to write the screenplay?*

RB: No. I didn't have any connection whatsoever with writing the screenplay, because I lived in Wisconsin and Mr. Hitchcock was operating in Hollywood, California. Later, when I got out to Hollywood, I was told by his former associate producer that, in the early stages, Hitch had asked, "Is the man who wrote this book available for the screenplay?" The person he asked was his MCA agent. And MCA said, "Oh, no! He's not available. Why don't you take this guy?" Mr. Stefano was not the first man chosen, either. The first man chosen was Mr. James P. Cavanaugh. Mr. Cavanaugh wrote the treatment of my book, which Mr. Hitchcock didn't like, so he fired Mr. Cavanaugh. It was then that the MCA people suggested Mr. Stefano, a radio writer. He was seconded by Joan Harrison, who was Hitchcock's associate producer on the television show and who knew something about Mr. Stefano's radio work. That's the way I heard the story told, and I have no reason to doubt it.

SS: *What did you think of the film?*

RB: I thought that Mr. Hitchcock had done a remarkable job, and I was pleased that he followed the story line. As he himself said, Mr. Stefano "contributed dialogue mostly, no ideas"—because there were no ideas in the screenplay that were not in the book. The book is the same story with the same characters; all that was done visually was to take my 40-year-old and make him a 30-year-old in the form of Anthony Perkins—which was necessary for the visual element of surprise, which could not have existed if he had been a middle-aged man. What would he be there for, except as the heavy?

SS: *What did you think of the sequels?*

RB: Well, I am, by nature, a person who likes tranquility and peace of mind. So I do my very best not to think of them at all.

SS: *You wrote a sequel to your original novel, but it has nothing to do with the movie sequel.*

RB: That is correct. It precedes the movie, of course; there would have been no movie if I hadn't done it. What happened is that the book was announced, and it received sufficient notice here and abroad. Universal, which had been sitting on the property for a quarter of a century and done nothing with it, suddenly sat up and said, "Hey! Maybe there's some money to be made here!" They had bought the license from Paramount as part of a deal. Paramount had originally released the film, although it was shot on the Universal lot. So Universal had the rights, but they didn't have any notions. Then, when they found out there was interest, they decided they'd have to make a PSYCHO II of their own. They approached me and said, "Would you like to scrap your novel and adapt the screenplay instead?" I told them what I had received as an advance for the novel, and they shut up. (Laughs) They then approached me with the same thing for the script of PSYCHO III. They said, "Would you like to novelize this?" And I said, "No, I don't think I would." I wrote *Psycho House* in self defense, because I knew that I was not going to be particularly happy with what they would do with PSYCHO III. By the time PSYCHO IV came along, I said, "Forget it." There was no hope there at all!

SS: *Do you feel, as Anthony Perkins did, that the movie has haunted you?*

RB: I think it has given me a sort of a label, a sort of an identification tag, which I have to wear for better or worse. And I have decided that I will wear it. Inasmuch as Mr. Hitchcock took all the cash, I see no reason for giving away my credit, too! I am now willing to be identified, and will continue to be identified as long as that book is around in constant reprint, as the author of *Psycho*.

SS: *Did the popularity of PSYCHO open any doors for you in Hollywood?*

RB: The movie opened up no doors whatsoever, because it wasn't a popular movie as far as the studios were concerned. Paramount didn't want Hitch to make it. He had the authority to make it. He could override objections; it was written into his contract. He could choose the vehicle that he wanted to film, and he

wanted to film PSYCHO. Paramount was very unhappy. They didn't like the title. "Psycho? What does that mean? Who's gonna know that title? Who's gonna be able to pronounce it? Or understand what it means?" Oh, they put a number of obstacles in Hitch's path! They told him that, first of all, they didn't have enough room at the studio. They were shooting too much television. They could not give him sound stages, so he said, "All right. I will shoot at Universal, where I'm shooting my television show. I will use my television cameraman, John Russell, and his crew to shoot it." And they said, "Well, you can't have a budget. You're not gonna get big-name stars and the whole CinemaScope treatment! No Cary Grant or Jimmy Stewart, and a budget that's about \$800,000." He said, "Well, that's all right. I'll shoot in black and white." They had a few other objections. In the end, Hitch took over most of the financing himself, with his own money, and made it his own way. Everybody said, "This is going to be a bomb." When it came time for Joan Harrison to renew her contract as producer of the television series, Hitch suggested that she take a percentage of the film instead, and she said, "No, Hitch. I don't think so, 'cause you've gone too far." Nobody had faith in it except Hitchcock. Nobody wanted anything to do with it. So, I wasn't brought out to the coast because of PSYCHO. It hadn't been filmed yet. It was nothing of note, nothing that anybody wanted their name associated with at all. That's probably why Mr. Hitchcock didn't get a big name, either. He was used to hiring writers who charged considerable fees for their work—Ernest Lehman and others. When the film came out, it was a commercial success immediately and a very big one—again with credit to Hitchcock, because he had the power to stipulate, "Nobody can get into the theater during the running of the film." The exhibitors howled bloody murder! "You can't do that!" He said, "That's the only way we will make a deal." And they did, and it made a lot of difference. It really did turn into a mystery, then. People kept their mouths shut and it all worked.



SS: But the critics didn't like it.

RB: The critics hated it; the critics said it was Hitchcock's worst picture! Bosley Crowther, the most influential critic in the country, said in the *New York Times* that it was "inferior, shoddy work"—and then the popular reaction was so great that what he'd said in June he forgot at the end of the year, and he selected *PSYCHO* as one of the 10 best. After that, of course, it took off and became a "classic" in quotes, and most of the critics recanted their initial opinions. But, at the time, it didn't improve my status as a potential screenwriter.

SS: Still, you began writing for such shows as *THRILLER* and *ALFRED HITCHCOCK PRESENTS*.

RB: I was doing that before the release of the film. I came out to do a cheap syndication show, one episode. They offered to pay my way out. I told them I'd never done television, I'd never done films, and I wanted to find out what it was all about. So it was, in a sense, a paid vacation. Somebody opened a door for me, and I came out and did it and they wanted more, so I ended up doing five or six. Meanwhile, the Hitchcock show had bought one or two stories of mine and had people adapt them. They offered me somebody else's story to adapt. I did a couple of those, and they wanted more of my stories, and I said, "Yes. But I'm gonna write the scripts myself." They said, "Oh, we don't like that." And I said, "Well, if you want them, you do them that way." And they did. Then *THRILLER* was created and they got me on that. But I had to get by, not as the author of *Psycho*, but on the basis of whether or not people liked the work I was doing. Apparently they did, and that's how it started.

SS: How do you feel about other writers adapting your work?

RB: In some instances, I'm pleased. In others, it depends on what they bring to it. As I said regarding *PSYCHO*, writers are very pleased when their characters and stories are transformed to another medium with some fidelity. But there are cases in which it's possible to expand, or enlarge, or improve. Certainly, it was fortunate for me that Mr. Hitchcock didn't get hold of me to write the script of *PSYCHO*, because I'd never written a screenplay, I'd ne-

ver seen a screenplay, and I'd not written any television. I probably would have bungled the job. Perhaps I could have done it, but I don't think the odds were in my favor.

SS: You worked with *Amicus* on several projects, including *THE HOUSE THAT DRIPPED BLOOD* and *ASYLUM*. Do you feel that the anthology format suited your work?

RB: I liked some of the episodes that were handled more or less the way I had scripted them. In some cases, the scripts were altered by people who I don't think did them a service or did me a service. In some cases, of course, they were hampered by the fact that they had low budgets and couldn't give me some of the special effects that I had scripted.

SS: Do you feel that, in films today, the story is neglected in favor of effects?

RB: That has been my chief gripe in recent years, that they are writing special effects and stringing them together the way sex acts are strung along the story line in a porno film. The story line is just an excuse for graphic sex, and some of these films are excuses for graphic violence.

SS: In 1984, you returned to one of your favorite themes in the novel *Night of the Ripper*. How much research did you put into it?

RB: A modest amount. I read perhaps 20 books that dealt with Jack the Ripper. What they largely dealt with was the same scanty set of known facts and a great deal of hypothesis—which I am more or less inclined to discard because, when one compares the various theories and then relates them to the known facts in terms of chronology and actual circumstances, you'll find that they have either squeezed or elongated certain parts of their theories to fit those facts—and when they don't fit, they just ignore the facts! I would say that research was not all that possible, except that it told me much more about the bare bones of the events. It didn't flesh him out too well.

SS: Your solution is unique and extremely enjoyable.

RB: That was a rather fun thing. It was also my way of exorcising Jack the Ripper from my psyche. I've written so much about him. By request, I did a story for an original anthology, called *A Toy for Juliette*. I did a story called "A Most Unusual Murder" for one of the mystery magazines. I did a *STAR TREK* episode about Jack the Ripper, called *WOLF IN THE FOLD*, and a couple of other things that were command performances or request items. I was getting to the point where I said to myself, "I don't really know what more I can do"—because prior to *Psycho* I'd been largely known as the author of "Yours Truly, Jack

Continued on page 111





# ALL SHOOK UP!

## Noel Neill and Jack Larson review LOIS & CLARK's remake of PANIC IN THE SKY

article and interviews by Jessie Lilley and Richard Valley

**A** massive asteroid hurtles towards the planet Earth! When it hits, it will cause untold destruction—perhaps the total obliteration of the human race!

That was the frightful premise of George Pal's *WHEN WORLDS COLLIDE* (1951), based on the 1932 Philip Wylie and Edwin Balmer sci-fi thriller of the same name.

It was also the premise of *PANIC IN THE SKY*, a 1953 second-season episode of syndicated television's *THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN*, starring George Reeves as the Man of Steel, Noel Neill as Lois Lane, Jack Larson as Jimmy Olsen, and John Hamilton as Perry White.

But, wait—it was also the premise of *ALL SHOOK UP*, a mid-season episode of ABC's *LOIS & CLARK: THE NEW ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN*, starring Dean Cain as Superman, Teri Hatcher as Lois Lane, Michael Landes as Jimmy Olsen, and Lane Smith as Perry White.

The basic elements of the two Superman story lines are identical: The asteroid is on a collision course with terra firma, while Superman plots his own course in order to destroy it. Turning a sizeable chunk of the intruder into space dust, Supes plummets back to Earth suffering a severe memory loss. The remainder of both shows concerns Clark Kent's efforts to remember the times of his life—including the fact that he's a super-powered alien from Krypton—before the remaining piece of planetoid knocks Metropolis for a loop.

Within that framework, the programs take decidedly different tacks—*THE ADVENTURES OF SUPER-*

*MAN* dark and doom-laden, *LOIS & CLARK*, with the luxury of an hour format, finding time for comedy and subplots detailing the patient efforts of Ma and Pa Kent (K Callan and Eddie Jones) to retrain their son as Superman, and Lex Luthor (John Shea) to persuade Lois to share the relative safety of his bunker. (Sweet guy, Lex; he's even redecorated the rabbit hole to look exactly like Lois' apartment.)

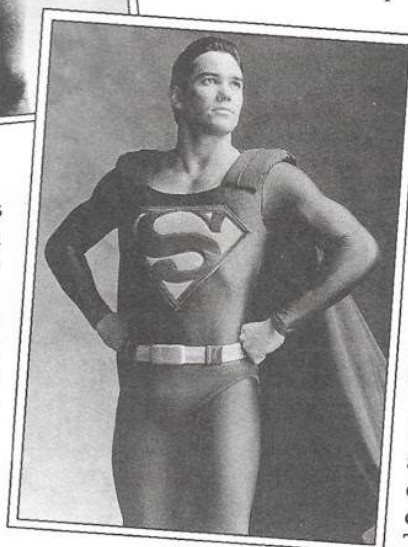
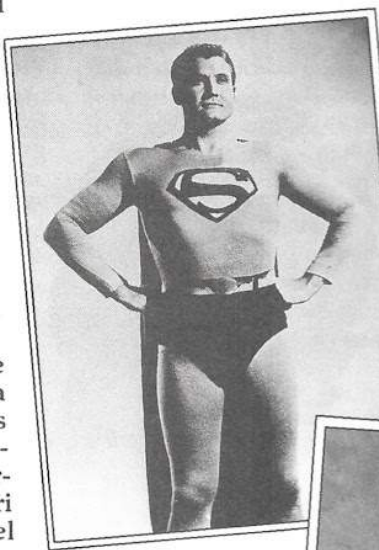
For our part, *Scarlet Street* took a different tack in reviewing and comparing the episodes: We went straight to Noel Neill and Jack Larson, stars of the original *PANIC IN THE SKY*, and asked them to do it for us!

"Well, the remake didn't work here and there," said Noel Neill, still the actress most closely identified with the role of Lois Lane. "It didn't have enough oomph. The show was well done as far as the cast was concerned, but ours was much more involved with the professor at the observatory;

there was much dialogue with him and Superman. It was quite different. I see what they're trying to do; they're taking some good ideas from the old shows, and I unfortunately had the original script and was ready to go with it. So I got lost!"

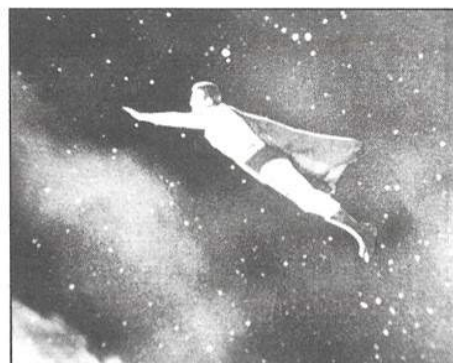
"I thought it was good," claimed Jack Larson, the man who made bow ties a fashion statement of 50s TV. "If you want me to compare it to ours, well, it's apples and oranges. We didn't talk about target audiences back when we made *THE ADVENTURES OF SU-*

*PERMAN*, but we imagined we were making it for the same kids that watched *HOPALONG CASSIDY*. They don't like 'mushy' stuff at all. Our audience turned out to



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**PREVIOUS PAGE:** George Reeves and Dean Cain are the Men of Steel in *THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN* and *LOIS & CLARK: THE NEW ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN*, respectively. **ABOVE:** Similar scenes in *PANIC IN THE SKY* and *ALL SHOOK UP*, with Superman (George Reeves, **LEFT** and **RIGHT**) heading into space as Superman (Dean Cain, **CENTER**) has a near-fatal encounter with an asteroid.

be for the generations; I know perfectly well that whole generations watch it together: grandparents, baby boomers, and young kids. Ours reached every audience, but *LOIS & CLARK*'s producers have targeted it to what is known as 'older women'—which means women 25 and over. And they're having success, because 'older women' like 'mushy'. The whole show is very kissy."

How did Noel, whose Lois never got to first base with the Superman of her dreams, feel about that?

"I like the show, the ones that I've seen, but I'm not used to the relationship between Lois and Clark. It's difficult for me to believe Lois can touch or kiss Clark and not know him as Superman. When we did it, we were kept at a distance, so that the children could believe that he looked so different without his glasses that no one would recognize him. But these two are nose to nose—and for Lois not to realize that this is the same person is a tad far-fetched."

And what was the original girl reporter's assessment of newcomer Teri Hatcher?

"Oh, I think she makes a great Lois Lane," enthused Noel. "She's a very good actress, and most attractive."

As for Jimmy Olsen, did Jack see many similarities between his interpretation and that of Michael Landes?

"Not one—and he's perfectly right to do it his way. As Jimmy developed on *THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN*, I was the straight juvenile, the boy next door in the first 26 episodes. I was considered at Warner Brothers, where I was under contract, the boy next door *par excellence*. As the show developed, I got to fulfill my ambition to play comedy. They let me do anything, because Jimmy became the most popular person on the show. I got tons of fan mail and over half the shows were centered on

Jimmy, because the character was so popular. I became, with Jimmy, a comic juvenile, and you could have put me right into a Mack Sennett feature. There's no comparison with my Jimmy and Michael's Jimmy, because he's a straight juvenile. Now, Michael may be an undiscovered great comedian, but so far he's not had the same opportunity that I had to steer Jimmy into comedy."

Echoing *THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN*, *LOIS & CLARK* has been striving to establish a relationship between Jimmy and Perry White—even though the new *Daily Planet* editor, a Presley fanatic (hence the episode's title), now booms "Great Shades of Elvis" instead of the classic "Great Caesar's Ghost!"

"That's for women 25 and older," laughed Jack. "I'll tell you: It's very possible that people educated in the last 20 years don't know who Julius Caesar was!"

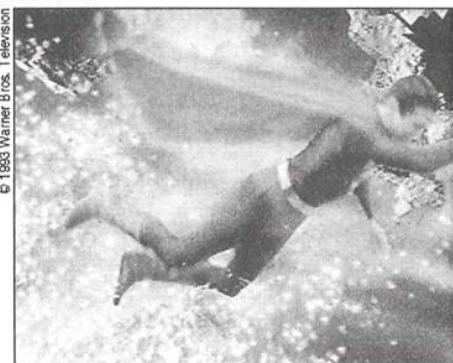
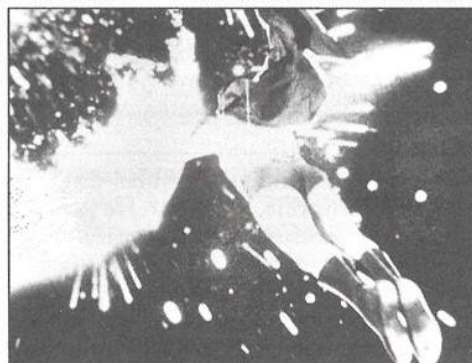
Noel noted that *PANIC IN THE SKY* was straightforward and dramatic, whereas *ALL SHOOK UP* had a tendency to stray. "They took some good parts out and threw in that subplot with Luthor. Then all of a sudden, he's gone! It was a token thing that didn't work too well."

Unlike Jack, Noel starred opposite a Lex Luthor of her own: character actor Lyle Talbot, who played the renegade scientist in the Columbia serial *ATOM MAN VS. SUPERMAN* (1950).

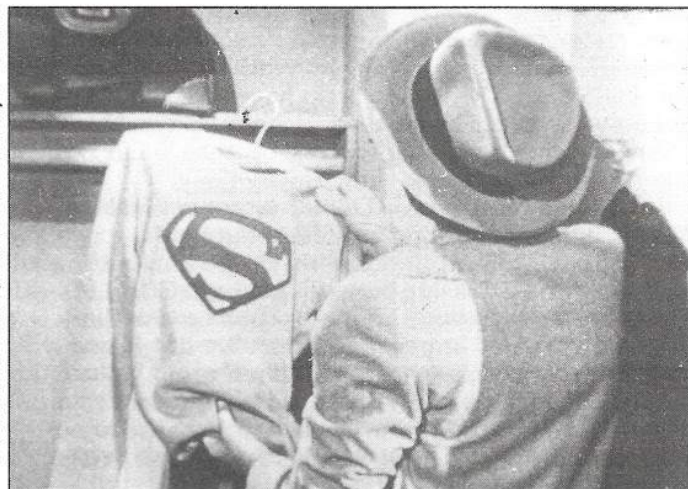
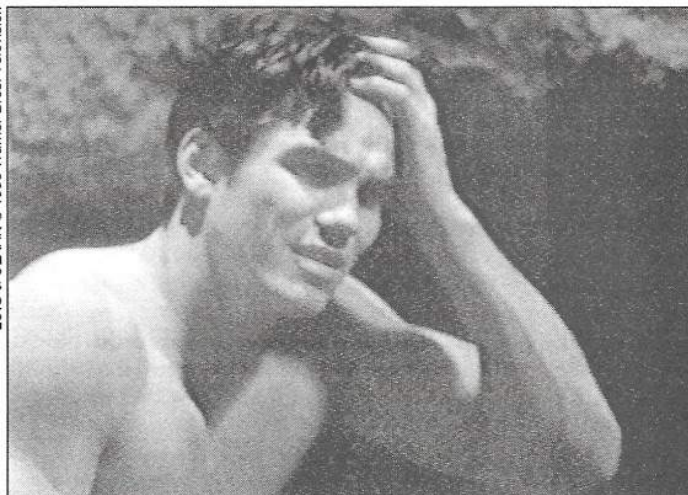
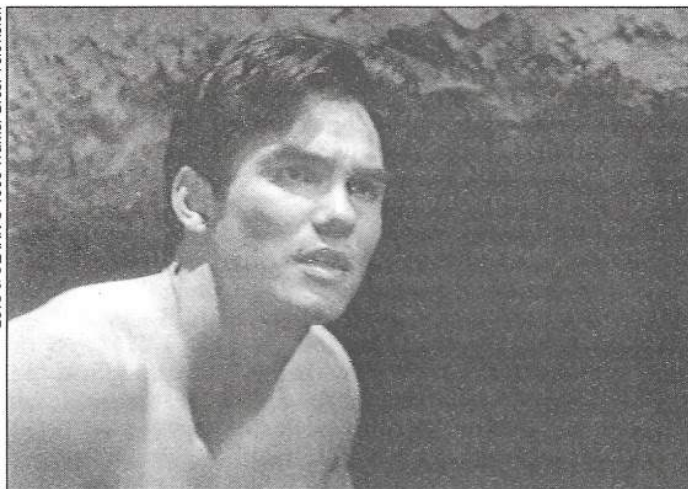
"Oh, well—Lyle Talbot was Lyle Talbot!" smiled Noel. "He was a real heavy. He had a shaved head and everything; he was spooky. John Shea is very charming, but he didn't seem to be too much of a threat to anybody. He's kind of cute, really."

So, too, was *ALL SHOOK UP*, compared to the world-shattering (if tight-budgeted) cataclysm of *PANIC IN THE SKY*.

Superman (Dean Cain, **LEFT** and **RIGHT**) goes head-to-head with an asteroid heading for Earth, while Superman (George Reeves, **CENTER**) has the same encounter. The result in both cases: amnesia.







**LEFT, TOP TO BOTTOM:** A Suicide Slum derelict finds a confused and seriously underdressed Superman (Dean Cain) in a hole after the Man of Steel plummets to Earth. **RIGHT, TOP TO BOTTOM:** Suffering from amnesia, Clark Kent (George Reeves) almost reveals his greatest secret to bow-tied cub reporter Jimmy Olsen (Jack Larson). Later, Clark finds the hidden closet containing his Superman costumes, which leads to a final clash with the asteroid and the restoration of his memory.

"In our script, there are dreadful earthquakes and floods," recalled Noel. "The meteor will hit Metropolis, but it's causing disasters all over the world. The professor says, 'I have this bomb; I think it can blow the meteor off track.' Superman says, 'Well, I'll take a chance'—and he flies up and places this little box on the meteor and pulls the switch. Everything blows up and Superman

tumbles down to earth. He ends up near his own apartment. He goes home, takes a shower, and crashes through the glass. Jimmy comes to look for him. He pulls him out of the shower and says, 'Oh! What happened! Jeepers, Mr. Kent!' Clark doesn't know where he is and what he is. When Jimmy leaves, Clark wanders around his apartment. He opens the secret panel in his closet and finds his





Superman uniforms. Of course, he's confused. He pounds his fist on the desk and the desk shatters—and then he remembers! He jumps into the suit and away he goes!"

Jack thought the comic elements suitable for LOIS & CLARK. "I think the audience had to have it. Of course, they're an hour and we were a half hour, so they had to pad it out. It's really more similar to MOONLIGHTING than our show. What they have is a newsroom instead of a detective agency, and Superman instead of Bruce Willis—and they are successfully doing it with that approach."

In PANIC IN THE SKY, Superman's return to Earth after his mind-numbing encounter with the leviathan is fairly

pedestrian. Landing in the outskirts of the city, the Man of Steel changes into his Clark Kent duds (force of habit?) and hitches a ride into town with a farmer (Jane Frazee). ALL SHOOK UP, which has the hero crash-land in a Suicide Slum alley, dressed up the sequence by dressing it down:

"One thing they had in their version that we didn't have was nudity," said Jack. "Superman was nude suddenly, when the old guy found him in the garbage heap. So they added nudity and I'm sure that it was real good for the ratings. That wasn't done in our day—and in that way, it was better than ours."

We asked Jack about PANIC IN THE SKY's own "nude scene", in which Clark Kent collapses in his shower. Since Clark wasn't wearing his glasses, why didn't Jimmy recognize him as Superman when he came to his rescue?

"Oh, no, no!" laughed Jack. "George and I both mentioned it, and Tommy Carr, the director, said, 'Let's not open that can of peas!' And he was exactly right, because my Jimmy was so dumb that he couldn't tell that Clark Kent was Superman with glasses! I would say that's always the case. Whoever plays whatever part, if they can't tell it's Superman because of a pair of glasses, they are very, miserably dumb."

"In the new version, I missed the interaction with Jimmy Olsen finding Clark," chimed in Noel, who's been tied to the Man of Steel's cape-strings in serials (1948's SUPERMAN in addition to the ATOM MAN sequel), on television (a 1992 episode of THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERBOY in addition to THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN), and in multi-million-dollar features (a cameo

as Lois Lane's mother in 1978's SUPERMAN, initially cut, but restored for television).

Jimmy may not have found Clark Kent, but he may find himself with a father in a future episode. Far from simply remaking an episode of THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN, the good folks at LOIS & CLARK may pick up a cast member or (hopefully) two.

"I met with them," said Jack. "I said to my agent, 'If they understand billing and money, I'll talk to them.' Michael Landes and I did an NBC radio show together, and he said that I was going to be in an episode in which I would play Jimmy Olsen's dad—which is fine by me."

Still, Jack and Noel's primary loyalties lie with THE ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN, and not without cause. It's an exceptional show that remains as popular 40-plus years after its debut as it was when it first hit the air.

According to Jack, "People still like it enormously. It had very good special effects, and I think George's flying was much better than Christopher Reeves'. The take-offs and landings were better than anything they did in

the films, with all the money they had. And we had the best character actors ever to exist in the motion picture business doing our shows, week after week. Jonathan Hale, who played the professor in PANIC IN THE SKY, was a very fine actor. He played Mr. Dithers in the Blondie series. To work with these people was an inspiration and a learning process for a performer. There were no better actors than we had on our show."

Would Noel like to see LOIS & CLARK tackle more classic ADVENTURES OF SUPERMAN?

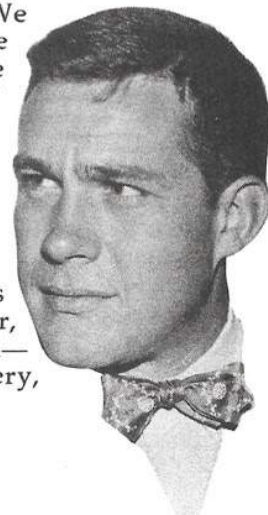
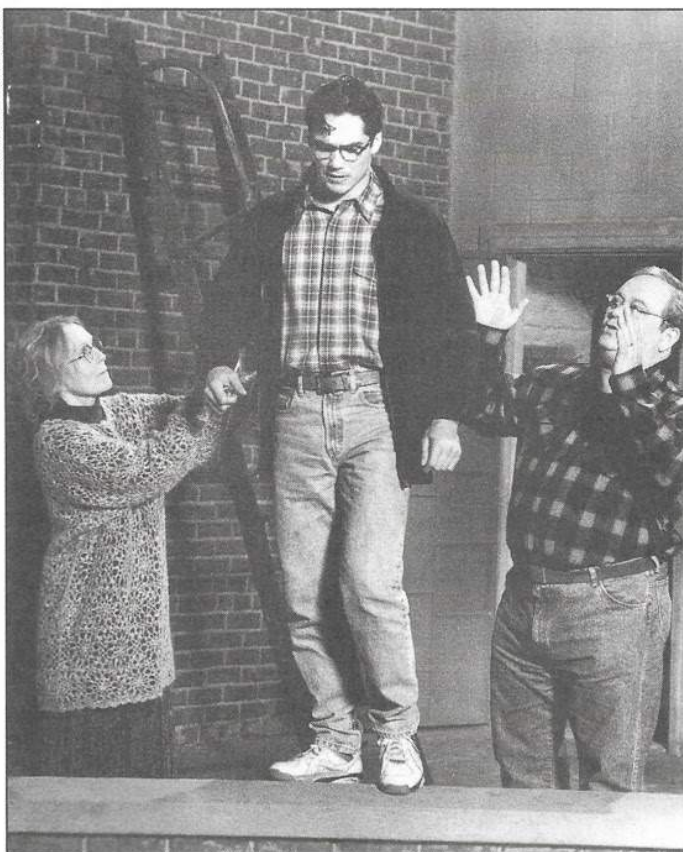
"Oh! I don't know what they would do to them! I mean, we had so many interesting ones in which Jimmy Olsen plays a private detective, which Jack loved to do. We had one where I was supposed to be a queen and Jack was my slave. I don't think they could do that in an adult

show. We

did them for a younger set. People say to me, 'Oh, I remember those shows! And I got my kid to watch it!' They force the poor things to watch those old shows!"

"I think LOIS & CLARK is terrific," concluded Jack. "I think every manifestation of Superman has been terrific in their Superman. George was wonderful, Christopher Reeves was wonderful, Gerard Christopher, who played Superboy, was very good—and this fellow, Dean Cain, he's very, very good."

Up, up, and away!





**THE VICTOR BUONO as STRANGLER**

**A Boy Only a Mother  
Could Love**  
by Michael Brunas





The startling first shot of *THE STRANGLER* goes to the heart of the matter: a closeup of a human eye, its gaze transfixed in febrile fascination. The watcher is not staring into mere space. The camera zooms in, revealing the reflected image of a dark-haired young woman. Unaware that she is being observed, the woman begins to undress, when the ringing of a telephone sends her scurrying into the adjacent parlor. Picking up the receiver, she can barely gasp a word, because the Peeping Tom who was hiding behind the door is already tightening her own knotted stocking around her neck. The lifeless woman falls limp, her attacker—a massive figure in a dark suit—dutifully closes her eyelids, oblivious to the now frantic voice on the other end of the telephone.

In the next scene, we see the face of the fat man: a bloated face revealing a thin mustache and an almost invisible mouth. He is playfully but purposefully stripping the clothing off a miniature doll. The “nude” toy takes its place among seven others like it in a wooden drawer, which is closed and locked . . . until Leo Kroll goes back on the prowl.

*THE STRANGLER*’s memorable first shot conjures memories of earlier movies, especially *THE SPIRAL STAIRCASE* (1946), in which the sex killer was seen only as a pair of eyes hidden from the view of his prey until the inevitable attack. But the visual motif is used more strikingly in the disturbingly artful compositions of Alfred Hitchcock’s *PSYCHO* (1960): notably, the closeup side view of Norman Bates (Anthony Perkins) squinting through a peephole as Marion Crane (Janet Leigh) prepares to shower. The “eye” image is picked up minutes later as the camera slowly zooms back from a closeup of Marion’s eye as her butchered body lies sprawled on the bathroom floor.

*THE STRANGLER*’s debt to *PSYCHO* goes beyond such stylistic cosmetics; it is just one of Hitchcock’s celluloid progeny spawned in the early 60s. Whereas Laird Cregar, until then the screen’s most notable serial killer, vented his homicidal impulses amid the opulence of 20th Century Fox’s spectacular back-lot reproduction of Victorian London in *THE LODGER* (1944) and *HANGOVER SQUARE* (1945), *PSYCHO* and its imitators required only minimal production values. *PSYCHO* smashed box-office records, sounding a clarion call for small-time independent producers to milk the theme of a psychologically unhinged murderer running amok. The rash of psychopathic potboilers, which included *HOMICIDAL* (1961), *THE COUCH* (1962), *TRAUMA* (1962), *PARANOIAC* (1963), and *THE PSYCHOPATH* (1966) frequently went *PSYCHO* one “better”, offering not only minimalist sets but also minimalist acting, writing, and direction. (*ANATOMY OF A PSYCHO*/1961 is a case in point.) *THE STRANGLER* is, at the very least, a cut above the rest—due particularly to its star, Victor Buono.

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For the eighth time, the big-city newspapers blare the story of yet another victim of a strangler who preys on young nurses. A team of police investigators, headed by Lieutenant Benson (David McLean), arrives on the latest crime scene to survey the evidence. The now-familiar pattern repeats itself: no fingerprints, motive, or sexual assault, although the culprit, following his usual practice, has taken care to compose the features and close the eyelids of his victim.

The lack of physical evidence compels Benson to ask police psychiatrist Dr. Clarence Sanford (Russ Bender) to sketch a psychological profile of the serial killer. Their man, Sanford concludes, is probably in his late 20s, a loner, and unmistakably schizophrenic.

The description neatly fits Leo Kroll (Victor Buono), a chemist summoned for questioning in a police sweep of suspects from the ranks of hospital workers. The suspect adroitly clears himself and is released, but there is more to Leo Kroll than meets the eye. Henpecked and reduced to a state of psychological ruin by his neurotic, possessive mother (Ellen Corby), Kroll’s pent-up sexual fury is sated only by the ritual of strangling young girls and collecting a doll as a bizarre trophy of his crime. His nightly ordeal of visiting his mother, who is confined to a nursing home, invariably ends in a torrent of maternal abuse. Leo’s only solace is to escape to the local arcade, where Tally (Davey Davison), a plain but attractive girl, works at a toss-a-ring booth.

When Mrs. Kroll suffers a severe attack, and is saved only by the speedy ministrations of her faithful nurse, Clara (Jeanne Bates), Leo’s mind again snaps. Enraged by the nurse’s intervention, Leo strangles her.

Kroll returns to the nursing home, certain that the news of Clara’s brutal murder will trigger a relapse in his mother’s fragile condition. Predictably,

Mother Kroll proceeds to lambast him mercilessly (“Now face facts, son—you’re not good-looking, you’re fat. . . . You never had any friends.”), but Leo retaliates by telling the old woman of the nurse’s murder. The shock has the expected effect, and Kroll watches in silence as his mother dies of cardiac arrest.

Free to marry Tally, Leo arrives at the arcade. But the police investigation into Clara’s death has sent them to the toss-a-ring stand, where they hope to trace the doll found smashed in the nurse’s apartment. Kroll watches as Detective Posner (Michael M. Ryan) quizzes Tally’s relief girl, Barbara (Diane Sayer). Fearing that she might incriminate him, Leo follows the girl to her apartment and garrotes her with her own stocking.

Barbara’s death leaves Tally badly shaken, as does Kroll’s insistent proposal of marriage. When the distressed girl spurns his advances, the embittered Kroll leaves in a fury. Tally relates the story to Posner, whose suspicions are aroused. Now convinced that Kroll is the



Oh, to think that Grandma Walton could be so mean! Ellen Corby drives Victor Buono to destruction in *THE STRANGLER* (1964).





LEFT: Lieutenant Benson and Sergeant Clyde (David McLean and Baynes Barron) are hot on the trail of THE STRANGLER. RIGHT: Selette Cole undresses for death. NEXT PAGE: Victor Buono caught stocking his victim!

strangler, Benson tries to enlist Tally to aid in a police trap, but the terrified girl insists on leaving town.

Tally returns home, unaware that Kroll is hiding within. As she packs, Leo charges from the closet and attacks her—but a concealed microphone planted in the apartment by the police signals Benson and company. The lieutenant and his men break down the door, guns blazing. Crashing through a window, Kroll's bullet-ridden body plummets to the pavement below, with his signature, a miniature doll, by his side.

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Like most black-and-white 'B' pictures of its vintage, THE STRANGLER usually ran as a supporting feature on its theatrical run, yet Victor Buono's vivid performance as Leo Kroll quickly resulted in his being dubbed "The New Laird Cregar". Weighing in at 300-plus pounds, Buono shared with Cregar not only an ample girth, but also a strong theatrical bearing that was especially convincing in conveying a seething sexual tension. It was a plum role that even a lesser actor could make interesting, but Buono gives the character subtle shadings and a full range of emotions.

"Your man is a schizophrenic with a personality split right down the middle," opines the sagacious psychiatrist to the world-weary police lieutenant. Taking this cue, Kroll's personality shifts gears constantly, slowly revealing its many disparate facets. He is imperious and arrogant while fending off a police interrogation, only to become bashful and girl-shy in his pathetic attempts to woo Tally. Working at the hospital laboratory, he listens to his female coworker's mounting fears of the sex killer with smug condescension. Hours later, he reverts to the brow-beaten man-child in the presence of his possessive, overbearing mother.

Buono handles the mood swings and emotional nuances with aplomb. The actor faced a similar challenge in his movie debut a year earlier, as Edwin Flagg, the smooth-talking music coach and would-be gigolo to Bette Davis in WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO BABY JANE? (1962).

Flagg had proved difficult to cast. Among those who turned thumbs down to the assignment was Peter Lawford, whose velour personality was once mistaken for act-

ing ability. ("It was a spot I wouldn't have given to my dry cleaner," quipped the graying heartthrob, who, married to a Kennedy, felt that the effete character might reflect badly on his wife's family.) In a casting master stroke, director Robert Aldrich decided on a different type entirely, finally selecting an overweight, classically-trained unknown whom he had seen on an episode of THE UNTOUCHABLES.

In BABY JANE, Buono and Davis make a delightfully improbable screen team, each embarking on their own charade to conceal his or her true self from the other: He, schmoozing Davis with a prissy air and put-on English accent, hiding the fact that he's a down-on-his-luck piano teacher living off the charity of his mother; she, several decades his senior, but no less phony with her over-eager schoolgirl manner, hiding the fact that she has imprisoned her crippled sister (Joan Crawford). The pair's few scenes together are impeccably acted and provide a nice contrast to the ghoulish tone of the rest of the piece.

The accolades and Academy Award nomination won by Buono for BABY JANE were surprisingly slow to jumpstart his career. (He would later blame his agent for overpricing him into the unemployment line.) BABY JANE proved Buono a first-rate comic actor, but his physical dimensions limited his choice of roles. After six months without work, Buono was ready to test his mettle as a dramatic actor, and signed on to play THE STRANGLER.

Though quite a comedown from the big-studio BABY JANE, THE STRANGLER at least gave the actor a vehicle of his own. Far from playing court jester to aging Hollywood royalty, he shared the spotlight with a supporting cast of competent (if somewhat bland) unknowns. The picture was initially titled THE BOSTON STRANGLER and intended as a highly fictionalized account of a then-unsolved series of killings. As originally conceived, the picture was to be shot in Boston with the cooperation of local police authorities, featuring Buono as the title character reenacting the crimes on the actual murder sites. This bizarre, obviously unworkable fusion of fact and speculation failed to get off the ground. By the time shooting began several months later, producers Samuel Bischoff and David Diamond opted instead for an original story line.

Riding on the success of BABY JANE, Buono, a Hollywood nonentity only a few months before, took full advantage of his new status. A devout Christian, the actor fought for script changes, and in some cases, demanded

*Michael Brunas is coauthor of Universal Horrors, and has written articles for Filmfax, Midnight Marquee, Fangoria, and Starlog, among others.*



## THE STRANGLER

### Credits

1963, an Allied Artists release. Producers: Samuel Bischoff and David Diamond. Director: Burt Topper. Screenplay: Bill S. Ballinger. Director of Photography: Jacques Marquette. Music: Marlin Skiles. Film Editor: Robert S. Elser. Running time: 89 minutes.

### Cast

Victor Buono (Leo Kroll), Davey Davison (Tally Raymond), David McLean (Lt. Frank Benson), Diane Sayer (Barbara Welles), Baynes Barron (Sgt. Clyde), Ellen Corby (Mrs. Kroll), Jeanne Bates (Clara Thomas), Russ Bender (Dr. Clarence Sanford), Michael M. Ryan (Detective Mel Posner), Byron Morrow (Dr. Morton), Wally Campo (Eggerton), Mimi Dillard (Thelma), Selette Cole (Helen), Robert Cranford (Jack Rosten), James Sikking (Artist), Victor Masi (Attendant), John Yates (Intern).

the removal of several scenes that he deemed too lurid. There were some understandably tense moments on the set, especially during the shooting of the murder scenes.

Veteran photographer Jacques Marquette recalls director Burt Topper clashing with Buono over a number of key scenes. "We were working on a stage at Paramount, and it was a scene where Buono is supposed to go into a shower that this woman [Diane Sayer] was in. The woman was supposed to be nude. And Buono said, 'No way I'll go in there with her nude.' He wouldn't go in there! So that loused Burt up!"

During the shooting of the climax, when Buono was required to attempt to strangle Davey Davison (who was dressed only in scanties), the actor stormed off the set when the producers balked at his demand that she wear a robe.

"I'm not a prude," insisted Buono, recalling the incidents. "I'm still a sex maniac in it, you know . . . There were some things in which I had to draw the line in sheer conscience. Of course, I don't think I would have gotten away with it if it hadn't been for that Academy Award nomination . . . I've lost several good parts outright because the producers couldn't see things my way, and I expect to lose more."

Today, *THE STRANGLER* seems sedate even by 1963 standards. A pretitile introduction, in which the producers give the usual self-serving credit to unnamed police departments and anonymous psychiatrists for their assistance, has the hollow ring of B-movie pretentiousness. The look and tone of the film, at least, are right; the low-key photography and the drab, ordinary sets capture the seedy ambiance aimed for by Topper. The best directors can find the extraordinary in the ordinary, but Topper is an efficient technician, better at establishing the overall mood than at nailing the details. He is, in short, the perfect TV director, and *THE STRANGLER* is comparable in style and quality to above-average television work of the period.

The movie suffers from its own schizophrenia, seesawing from a fairly gripping psycho-shocker to a run-of-the-mill

police blotter docudrama. In the process, it happily manages to avoid one or two basic Hollywood conventions. Tally is an offbeat, unheroic heroine, far more concerned with saving her own skin than with aiding the police. (The ending is annoyingly abrupt, so much so that the viewer isn't even sure if Kroll has actually succeeded in killing her.) Lieutenant Benson is the token hero, but, in a nod to realism, there are far more than the usual number of police characters working actively on the case. Although this small mob of plainclothesmen doesn't show much individuality—they're a pretty faceless bunch—it's nice to see the obliteration of the time-honored cliché of a super-cop single-handedly cracking the case. It's too bad they never got around to obliterating police psychiatrist Sanford (played by American International regular and writer of 1957's *VOODOO WOMAN*, Russ Bender). The character is there simply to tie up, rather too neatly, every quirk, fetish and loose end in Kroll's tangled persona—rendering it all in the most dubious psychobabble.

Bill Ballinger's script, apparently customized for Buono, cavalierly lifts a few key ideas from other movies. Its subplot of mother love gone berserk, culminating in matricide, is so *PSYCHO*-inspired that it practically amounts to outright theft. Mrs. Kroll's character is patently Mrs. Bates redux (minus the taxidermy). Leo Kroll, too, is an obvious reworking of Edwin Flagg, Buono's mother-fixated, sexually ambivalent character from *WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO BABY JANE?*, with an added psychotic bent. His doll fetish, in fact, is purloined from Bette Davis' look-alike doll, a grim reminder of her lost youth, from the same movie.

There's some good work in the supporting cast, although David McLean hasn't enough vinegar in his personality to make Benson interesting. The female roles have a bit more dimension and are generally better played. Ellen Corby (before she became Grandma Walton) is well-cast, playing Kroll's battle-axe mother to nagging perfection. Davey Davison and Diane Sayer, both TV actresses of the period, are extremely believable in their respective roles of Tally and Barbara. You'll have to look close to catch James Sikking as a police artist; the actor got an unexpected career boost years later when he added a middle B to his name and landed a role on TV's *HILL STREET BLUES*.

*Continued on page 107*





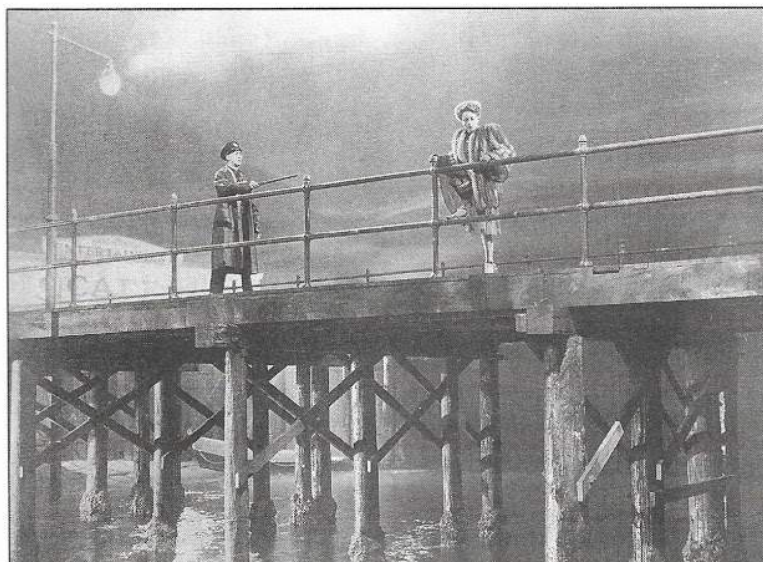
*Murder, Mystery, and Mother Love*



*Mildred Pierce*

*by Joan E. Serivani*





**LEFT:** The first appearance of the title character in *MILDRED PIERCE* (1945) is almost her last, as Joan Crawford prepares to hit the drink (and we don't mean Pepsi). **RIGHT:** A friendly cop (Garry Owen) sends Mildred on her way.

When Joan Crawford fans packed an upper East Side auction house last June to bid on practically everything the late movie star left in her closets, even the most avid collectors of movie memorabilia were stunned at the sky-high prices they demanded.

A bound script for *MILDRED PIERCE*, her 1945 *tour de force*, went for the almost unheard-of price of \$7,475, and the most coveted item, the gold-plated Academy Award statuette she earned for that performance, sold for more than five times its estimated \$12,000 value!

This unexpected outpouring of affection for a 48-year-old film too often dismissed as a "woman's picture", and an actress once labeled "box-office poison", demands a reexamination of the movie, its production, and the accomplishment of its leading lady.

Even with the "powers-that-were" at Warner's solidly behind the project, getting *MILDRED PIERCE* to the screen proved an arduous task. Preproduction, casting, and filming were fraught with as many tribulations as would later plague the picture's long-suffering heroine.

Brash, young writer/producer Jerry Wald, who had previously gone to battle in 1943's *DESTINATION TOKYO* and 1945's *OBJECTIVE, BURMA!*, was the first to bring the 1944 pulp novel to the studio's attention. Although the slim tome had never reached best-seller status, Wald found the plot intriguing and talked up its hit potential.

The book's author, James M. Cain, a 20-minute egg of the hard-boiled school, had already seen his 1941 magazine story, "Double Indemnity", successfully translated to screen (by Billy Wilder in 1944). Following up that hit with a film interpretation of *Mildred Pierce*, its main character another gutsy woman with a mission, seemed to Wald to guarantee big box office.

Cain's title character was an ambitious, obsessive housewife whose blind devotion to her two daughters drives away her feckless husband, Bert, forcing her to fend for herself and her children. Mildred makes a resolute climb from waitress to restaurateur, but it is a Pyrrhic victory. Soon, one daughter dies, and the other, the utterly vile Veda, takes everything her mother can provide and continually demands more—including Mildred's second husband, Monty, himself a manipulative parasite. The payoff in Cain's story was Mildred's discovery that the cold-blooded Veda had seduced Monty,

which leaves the broken-hearted Mildred alone and wrapped up in some very heavy soul searching.

"I think my stories have some quality of the opening of a forbidden box," the tough-guy author once opined, and Mildred and her adolescent daughter, Veda, are typical Cain characters: ruthless, realistic, materialistic, and sensitive to minor social taboos while seemingly oblivious to the consequences of committing capital offenses.

True to form, the all-powerful Hollywood censors were far from enamored of Cain's steamy domestic melodrama and its cast of amoral characters, and the task of creating a *MILDRED PIERCE* that would retain its wicked bite, yet avoid affronting the moral sensibilities of the day, fell to six different writers who devised seven different treatments. The studio even considered renaming the film *COURAGE* to further sanitize its image.

Some film historians credit Wald with adding mystery and murder to the story line, and, indeed, it is hard to imagine *MILDRED PIERCE* without this potent shot of mayhem. Wald, dubbed by a wag of the day "the fastest and smoothest talker ever born in Brooklyn", is alleged to have conjured up offing the Monty Beragon character after attending a screening of *DOUBLE INDEMNITY*.

It seems more likely, however, that Wald opened the picture with the murder of the story's jaded fornicator in order to satisfy the Production Code Authority, as their regulations allowed for the dramatization of evil, as long as these crimes did not remain unpunished.

Credit for the script was ultimately given to Randal MacDougall, who received a well-deserved Best Screenplay nomination for his trouble. The final product, a true masterpiece, contains elements of murder, adultery, blackmail, mother love, tragedy, and comedy.

A first-class technical and production crew was assembled. Ernest Haller, who had previously photographed Bette Davis in *JEZEBEL* (1938) and Vivien Leigh in *GONE WITH THE WIND* (1939), would be behind the camera, the ubiquitous Max Steiner (1933's *KING KONG*, *GONE WITH THE WIND*, 1942's *CASABLANCA*, et al.) would create the score, and formidable Hungarian bully Michael Curtiz would direct.

Casting the picture proved to be a true battle of wills. Crawford was Wald's first choice for the long-suffering Mildred, but Curtiz would not hear of it. This





was no insignificant obstacle, as the former actor and trampoline artist had plenty of clout on the Warner lot after a string of artistic and box-office successes (1938's *THE ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD* and *ANGELS WITH DIRTY FACES*, 1940's *THE SEA HAWK*, and a Best Director win for *CASABLANCA*). Renowned for creating a vivid atmosphere, well-modulated performances, and striking visual compositions, Curtiz is said to have been incensed by the producer's suggestion. "Her and her shoulder pads!" he reportedly bellowed. "Me direct that temperamental bitch, not on your goddamned life. Why should I waste my time on a has-been!"

The studio had initially offered the story of the self-sacrificing mother to Bette Davis and, when she turned thumbs down, gave serious thought to major actresses Rosalind Russell and Claudette Colbert and such second string stars as Ida Lupino and Ann Sheridan. Curtiz, meanwhile, was lobbying heavily for Barbara Stanwyck, who had made a splash the year before in *DOUBLE INDEMNITY*; in the end, however, Jerry Wald was to have his way, and the "poisonous" Crawford would be awarded the plum.

For the 41-year-old actress, it couldn't have come at a better time. The former shop girl had been a major star for over two decades, but her popularity went into a tailspin during the war years. MGM, the studio that had discovered her, groomed her, and guided her to the top of the Hollywood heap, now seemed at a loss as to what to do with their aging glamour girl. They insisted that she accept roles for which she was ill-suited, in films that were mediocre at best. Keenly aware that what was left of her career was in jeopardy, she asked for release from her contract, and the studio gladly obliged. Crawford was thrilled, therefore, with the prospect of playing the meaty role of Mildred Pierce, a character who pulls herself up by her bootstraps to join the ranks of the well-heeled—but there was still the obstacle of Curtiz.

As a show of good faith (and in what turned out to be a most effective ploy), Joan volunteered to audition for the feisty director—a "concession" that both surprised and pleased Curtiz. The screen test went well, and Curtiz relented. According to Crawford, "After the test [Curtiz] was so engrossed, he forgot to yell 'cut!' He forgot all about Stanwyck."

When it came time to cast the villainous Veda Pierce, Wald favored Ann Blyth, a fast-rising ingenue at Universal, but Curtiz, again, was the fly in the ointment. He thought the 16-year-old too "goody-goody" for the selfish gold-digging brat. In retrospect, it seems absurd that Curtiz initially sided with the studio's choice: the saccharide Shirley Temple, who was now well into adolescence and, though unproven in her ability, eager to take on Veda's guileful persona.

Crawford, however, took Ann under her wing and convinced doubters that Blyth was the only one to portray the ultimate bitch daughter. Said Joan, "I was there when Ann came in. She was so lovely that my first reaction was, she's too sweet; she'll never be able to play the bitchy scenes. But we read together and she was wonderful. Then we tested together. Ann was perfect. She was the right age, the right type, a superb actress and singer."

The rest of the principal parts were pulled together primarily from Warners' feature players: Bruce Bennett (1948's *THE TREASURE OF THE SIERRA MADRE*) as the dull but dependable first husband (the unavailable Ralph Bellamy was the producer's first choice), newcomer Zachary Scott (1944's *THE MASK OF DIMITRIOS*) as Monty, the penniless aristocrat who becomes Mildred's second husband. Caustic comedienne Eve Arden (1937's *STAGE DOOR*, 1959's *ANATOMY OF A MURDER*) was cast as Mildred's loyal, wisecracking coworker and confidante. Lee Patrick, everyone's favorite secretary, Effie Perrine, in two versions of *The Maltese Falcon* (1931 and 1941), and Cosmo Topper's dotty wife on TV, was tapped to play the surprisingly sympathetic role of the "other woman", Maggie Binderhoff (pronounced "Biederhoff" in the movie). Chunky, moon-faced comic Jack Carson (1944's *ARSENIC AND OLD LACE*, 1954's *A STAR IS BORN*) rounded out the key players as an ambitious cad who forces Mildred's first husband out of business, sets up her restaurant chain, and ultimately decides that, if he can't have Mildred, he might as well have her money.

Completion of the casting, however, did nothing to calm the storm surrounding the project. It persisted well into production, with Crawford and Curtiz continually at odds. One story reveals how Curtiz, upset by the star's glamorous makeup, stormed out from behind the camera and smeared Crawford's lipstick all over her face. The mortified actress fled to her dressing room in tears. On another occasion, he accosted Crawford mid-scene, attempting to rip the shoulder pads from her cos-

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The road to success: Mildred (Joan Crawford) chats with Monty Beragon (Zachary Scott) while preparing to open her restaurant, puts an apron on partner Wally Faye (Jack Carson) on opening night while Lottie (Butterfly McQueen) looks on, and counts the take with business manager Ida Corbett (Eve Arden).

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MILDRED PIERCE opens with an exquisite exterior shot of a beach house (the location was actually Curtiz' weekend hideaway) shrouded in darkness. Only a few lights define a ragged shoreline. The camera's eye draws the viewer inside, where six shots ring out a deadly tattoo. A slim, handsome man in a custom-tailored tuxedo falls to the floor and utters his final word: "Mildred". The lens takes in a mirror splintered by a bullet's impact and a sedan careening down the road, disappearing into the fog-bound night.

Meanwhile, a despondent Mildred Pierce (Crawford) wanders down a mist-laden pier. Stopping to gaze into the murky deep, she leans precariously toward the edge,

tume. He is reported to have called her "Phony Joanie" to her face, and "that rotten bitch" behind her back.

"He put me through a postgraduate course in humiliation," Crawford recounted. "Then, when he found out I could take it, he started training me."

Crawford, always the pro, was determined to win over the volatile director. She toned down the war paint and discarded the studio's wardrobe, replacing it with housedresses purchased at Sears for \$2.98 each. Curtiz remained skeptical, but after examining the garments, he realized that he was not dealing with padding, but rather with his leading lady's fullback frame.

The crew, on the other hand, was on Crawford's side from the get-go, and often soothed her wounded ego with stories of Curtiz' on-set abuse of Bette Davis, relating that the director repeatedly humiliated the Warner movie queen by calling her a bum (among other less flattering references) in front of cast and crew.

MacDougall's screenplay, in the meantime, continued to be written and edited throughout the filming, compelling Curtiz to shoot scenes in chronological order and the players to learn their lines literally as they were being penned.

MILDRED PIERCE closed 13 days behind schedule, whereupon Curtiz immediately went to work with the montage unit.

By this time, industry anticipation over the picture had gotten to Cain, who wrote Wald that he was eager to see a rough cut since "the hearsay on MILDRED PIERCE is so uniformly enthusiastic". Wald responded that it was indeed "a damn good picture!—one you'll be proud to put your name on". But Wald wasn't about to let anyone outside the studio see the picture until it was complete—not even the author. So he put Cain off through the spring and summer, setting up the film's premiere in September a few weeks after V-J Day.

The instincts and timing were perfect. MILDRED PIERCE tapped directly into the postwar mood of the country—generally upbeat, but with undercurrents of doubt about traditional notions of sexuality, marriage, women in the workplace, and the economy in general.

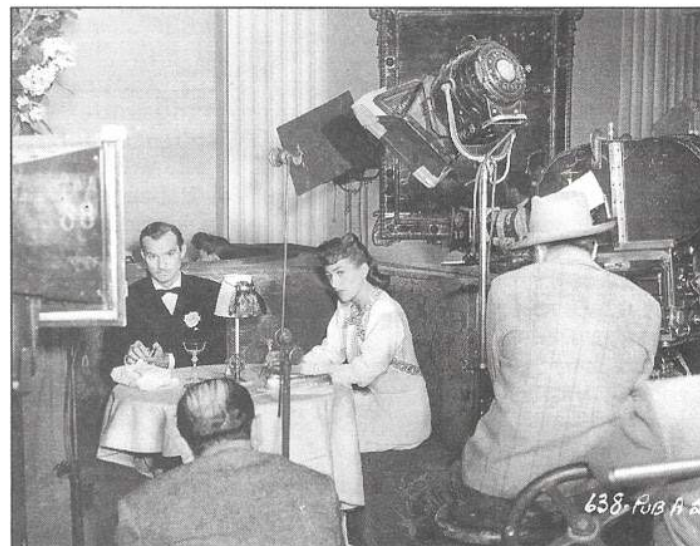
"A magnificent performance", reported *Life* magazine; "... sincere and effecting", said the *New York Times*. James Agee of *The Nation* found the film "gratifying", with Crawford "giving the best performance of her career".







Director Michael Curtiz goes over the script with Joan Crawford, Eve Arden, and an unidentified writer.



Curtiz (back to camera) coaches Crawford and Zachary Scott in a closeup for 1945's *MILDRED PIERCE*.



Posed for publicity, Curtiz, Crawford, and the crew "view the day's rushes" for *MILDRED PIERCE*.

but is interrupted by the sharp rap of a billy club against a railing. A no-nonsense cop on the beat (Garry Owen) reprimands her for contemplating a "swim" and sends her on her way. Mildred slips into a nearby boardwalk honky-tonk and manages to lure the club owner, her former business partner, Wally Faye (Jack Carson) back to the beach house. Once inside, she slinks out the back way, and locks Faye in with the corpse of her second husband (Monty Beragon, played by Zachary Scott). When Faye discovers the stiff, he attempts to escape by diving through a window, whereupon he immediately falls into the waiting arms of the law.

Now, all the players are rounded up and taken to headquarters, where Mildred soon learns that her first husband, Bert Pierce (Bruce Bennett), is the chief suspect. She is told that Beragon was killed with Bert's gun and that he had a motive—jealousy. Mildred is aghast. She insists that Bert is innocent and begins to spill her story to Inspector Peterson (Moroni Olsen).

Mildred says she feels that she was born in the kitchen, a wife and mother. She baked pies and cakes for extra money, the better to spoil her two daughters, Veda and Kay (Jo Ann Marlowe), with expensive clothes and music lessons. Her marriage, however, is troubled, as Bert, despite Mildred's protests, continues an ongoing affair with Maggie Binderhoff (Lee Patrick).

Separating from the unemployed Bert, Mildred must find a way to support herself and her children. After weeks of desperate searching, she gains employment in a busy downtown restaurant and, with the help of her new-found friend, Ida Corbett (Eve Arden), soon learns the business. The ambitious Mildred squirrels away her tips, and eventually has enough money set aside for a down payment on a restaurant of her own. She discovers that the ideal site is owned by a social-set layabout, Monty Beragon, and assisted by her husband's former partner, Wally, Mildred sweet-talks Monty into giving her a good deal on the property. She soon falls for the smooth-talking Beragon, but of her new affair comes personal tragedy. During a romantic interlude with Monty, Mildred's younger daughter, Kay, takes ill at the home of her husband's paramour, and dies.

To bury her grief, Mildred throws herself into her business. Her restaurant is a great success. She is now head-over-heels in love with Monty and the grand life style he seems to offer. Veda, too, becomes enamored of Monty and his millionaire trappings, and, as time progresses, she becomes a despicable little snip, who lies, steals, blackmails, berates her mother for lack of pedigree and career choice, and even seduces her stepfather—all in pursuit of the almighty dollar.

All this *sturm und drang* inevitably causes poor Mildred to neglect her growing chain of bustling eateries, and the sleazy duo of Faye and Beragon take advantage of her distraction to successfully seize control of the business.

The film reaches its climax where it began, back at the isolated beach house; it's a terrific scene made more so by the eerie shadow play and unique camera angles implemented by Haller. This time, the viewer witnesses both the murder and the sordid circumstances that precede it. Cutting back to the grim surroundings of the detective's office, the case is wrapped up by the implementation of a routine but clever investigative ruse. An unrepentant Veda admits to her crime, revealing that she

*Continued on page 108*



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*I Remember Mama*

# *Ann Blyth*

*on the Making of Mildred Pierce*

She wandered starry-eyed through KISMET (1955) bedecked in "Baubles, Bangles, and Beads". She found royal romance with THE STUDENT PRINCE (1954), answered "The Indian Love Call" in ROSE MARIE (1954), and hit the skids in THE HELEN MORGAN STORY (1957).

Born in Mount Kisco, New York, a radio songstress at five, a Broadway actress at 13, and a Hollywood juvenile at 15, Ann Blyth is perhaps best known for her starring roles in several MGM musicals—and her fantasy-film splash in MR. PEABODY AND THE MERMAID (1948).

In fact, her career has been remarkably varied, and includes roles in crime stories (1947's KILLER McCOY), dramas (1948's ANOTHER PART OF THE FOREST), Westerns (1949's RED CANYON), biopics (1957's THE BUSTER KEATON STORY), and one of the greatest of 1940s film noir classics—MILDRED PIERCE (1945).

Here, in an exclusive talk with *Scarlet Street*, lovely Ann Blyth shares some memories of her melodic—and murderous—career....

*Interview by Jessie Lilley*

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**LEFT:** Before *MILDRED PIERCE*, Ann Blyth starred in several Universal musicals with Donald O'Connor (pictured) and Peggy Ryan. **RIGHT:** Veda (Ann Blyth) is stunned! Mama Mildred (Joan Crawford) is—gasp—a waitress!

*Scarlet Street:* How did you come to be cast in *MILDRED PIERCE*?

**Ann Blyth:** Well, along with many others, I tested for the role, and was lucky enough to have Miss Crawford test with me. The test was directed by Mike Curtiz and it was a wonderful experience. I'm sure that everyone is aware by now that it was Joan's comeback movie, for want of a better word; I think we

recognized that both roles were terrific parts, and we just gave it our best to help one another. She certainly was helpful to me.

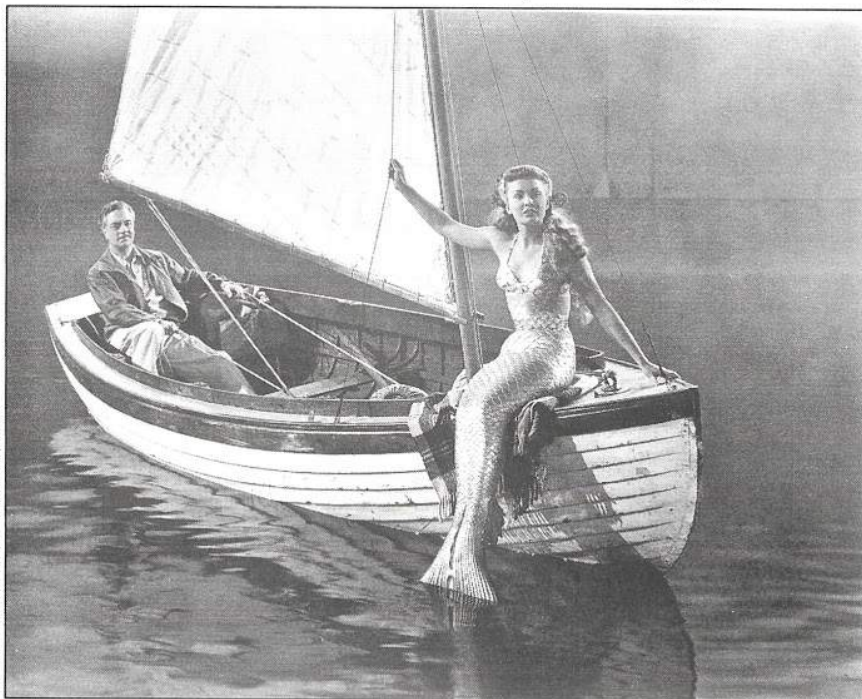
**SS:** Except for a brief appearance in *HOLLYWOOD CANTEEN*, this was Joan Crawford's first picture after she left MGM. Was there a feeling within the industry—or with Crawford herself—that her career depended on the success of *MILDRED PIERCE*?

**AB:** Well, certainly, a lot of publicity would have one believe that. I'm not sure that another part might not have come along, but it certainly was the part for that year.

**SS:** She read with you for your test.

**AB:** We did the whole test. I mean, we took scenes from the movie as though we were actually shooting the movie. We just didn't read for the part; we filmed the test.

**LEFT:** You should see the one that got away! William Powell and Ann Blyth in *MR. PEABODY AND THE MERMAID* (1948). **RIGHT:** Ann Blyth played a child only a Mommie Dearest could love in *MILDRED PIERCE* (1945). **NEXT PAGE:** The Frankenstein Monster (Glenn Strange) hauls in a big catch in a 1948 Universal publicity still.





SS: Was she aware of you before the test?

AB: I have no way of knowing that. I don't recall that she ever said one way or the other.

SS: Did she give you any tips about playing Veda?

AB: I just think that we both instinctively knew what each of us wanted to do—and with Mike Curtiz' help we came pretty close to achieving it.

SS: Was working with a star of Crawford's magnitude at all intimidating for one so young?

AB: I don't think so, because I'd been very lucky early on in my career to have been on Broadway with Paul Lukas and Lucile Watson. I had met many people of great stature. I found them to be interesting and good to work with, and again I just put my shoulders back and thought, "This is a terrific part. Do the best you can."

SS: You weren't at all apprehensive about playing such an unsympathetic character as Veda Pierce?

AB: Oh, no! A good part is just that: a good part. It has nothing to do with who you really are or how you live your life.

SS: We understand that Shirley Temple campaigned heavily for the role.

AB: I don't recall that I knew that at the time. It was only after the movie was cast that I heard about it.

SS: In the film, Veda blames the way she turned out on her upbringing. Do you agree that the responsibility, in whole or in part, lies with Mildred?

AB: Certainly, if a child is spoiled, some responsibility lies with the parent, but I think a large part of Veda's makeup was just not put together. She was, I believe, not a good person. She opted to live her life the way she wanted to, instead of accepting responsibility for her own actions, and expected everyone to be responsible for her—which is not unlike what we read so much about today. Too often, it's very difficult for any of us to admit our mistakes, but that's part of the problem. I think that being able to do so is a very freeing experience.

SS: The censors were vehemently opposed to the plot of MILDRED PIERCE.

AB: It seems a little ridiculous today, doesn't it? Compared to what we see today, it's mild.

SS: Did you find director Michael Curtiz to be a hard taskmaster?

AB: He was a taskmaster, but I liked him; I liked him very much. I enjoyed working with him, and I had the good fortune to work with him again, years later.

SS: In what film?

AB: THE HELEN MORGAN STORY.

SS: Reportedly, there was a battle of wills between Crawford and Curtiz.

AB: Well, I think maybe when that was happening, I was off in school. (Laughs) I wasn't in on a lot of that. I'm sure it probably existed, but if you're not there when it's happening, it's rather ridiculous to say that it did.

SS: Your first films were a series of Universal musicals with Donald O'Connor and Peggy Ryan—hardly training for MILDRED PIERCE.

AB: No, but early on I had played very dramatic roles in the theater. Speaking of Donald and Peggy, they are dear, dear friends to this day.

SS: Their films are so much fun.

AB: Well, there's such an innocence and joyfulness about them. They weren't the greatest movies, but the joy expressed is delightful. That's why people still remember them.

SS: Is it true that the MILDRED PIERCE script was in constant revision while the film was being made?

AB: I remember having to learn pages of dialogue, which would indicate that changes were indeed made. As I'm sure you know, in the book there was no murder.

SS: Were you aware from the beginning that you'd be revealed as the murderer?

AB: Oh, I think so. I think it was just a natural course for the script, and certainly for my role, to take. Again, that's one of its good features—that this terrible person, for once in her life, has to pay the price.

SS: MILDRED PIERCE contains a truly spectacular supporting cast.

AB: Oh! Everyone in it! We became a family, and they were so kind to me. As dark a movie as it was, it was fun. Certainly, with Jack Carson and dear Eve Arden . . .

SS: She had such flawless timing.

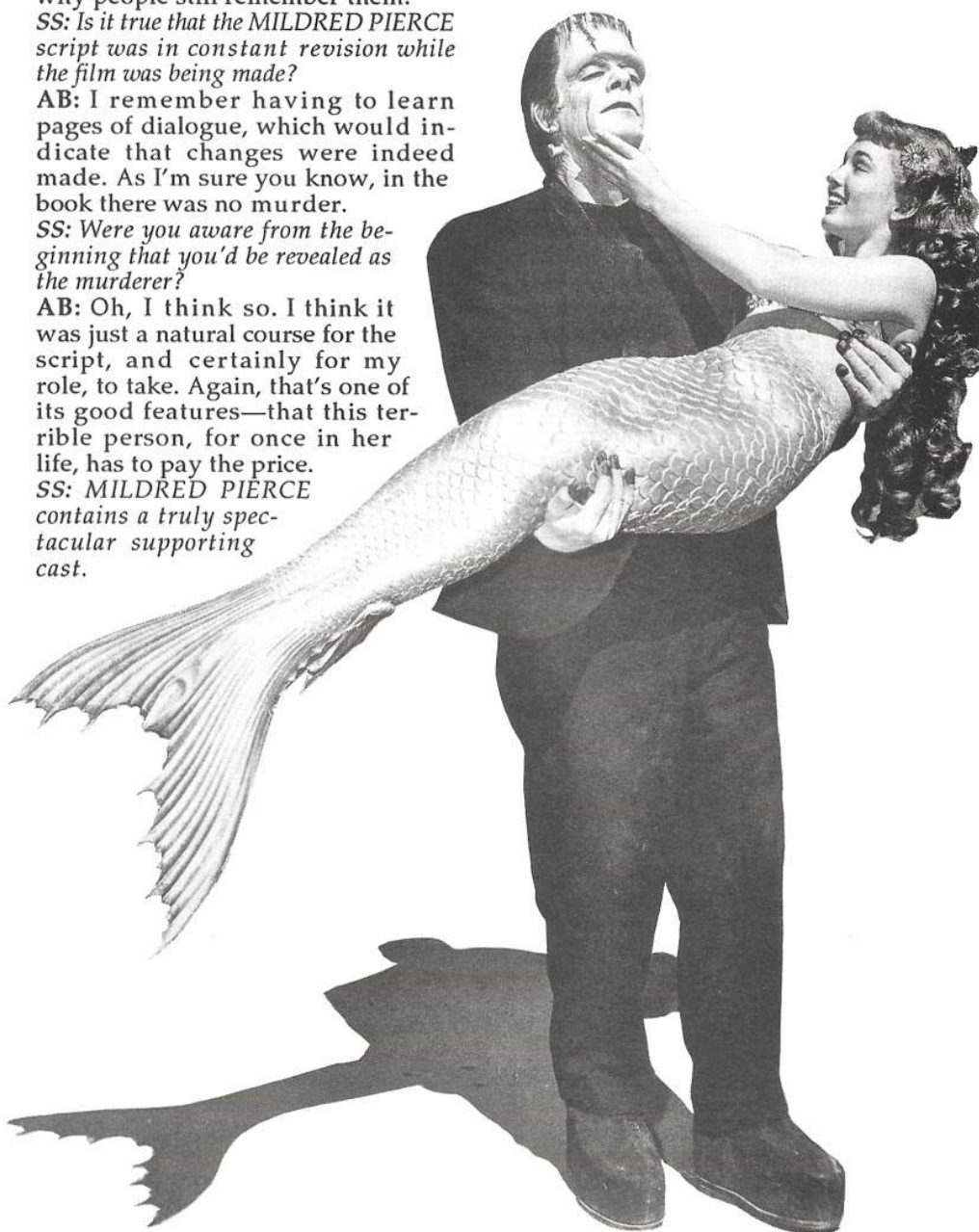
AB: She was wonderful.

SS: Was she funny in real life?

AB: Oh, delightful. Again, she was a friend and a delightful lady. It was so natural for her; her acting was completely natural. She was wonderful to watch. You know, you hear her name and smile, because you know a movie's going to be wonderful with her in it. It's a lovely way to be remembered.

SS: It certainly is. Butterfly McQueen was in the film, too.

AB: Dear Butterfly. She came to know my mother, my dear mother; she was so fond of her. I just thought, "How dear and how sweet."





SS: Did you keep up your acquaintance-ship with her?

AB: Yes. In later years, Butterfly went back to school and received her degree. I remember once, when I was playing in Atlanta—I don't recall whether I was in *THE SOUND OF MUSIC* or *THE KING AND I*—she came to see me, and I was so delighted to see her. I was so proud that she'd gone back to school and accomplished what she set out to do.

SS: Bruce Bennett was also in the cast.

AB: He was very sweet; he seemed very much like the character in the movie. Very quiet.

SS: When the movie wrapped, was there a feeling among cast and crew that you had made a great film?

AB: Well, of course, probably any actor would say that you don't set out to do anything but the best, but I think we did feel a certain—almost a relaxed feeling about having done some good work. Perhaps that's the best feeling of all.

SS: When *MILDRED PIERCE* proved to be such a major hit, were you offered similar bad-girl roles?

AB: Yes, as a matter of fact. Well, not bad girls, exactly, but perhaps a little on the dark side. (Laughs) I had already begun another one with Zachary Scott, and that was when I had my toboggan accident and never did finish it.

SS: A toboggan accident?

AB: I was thrown from a toboggan. We were in the mountains and I fractured my back. And the movie? I don't even recall its name, because I think they had changed it when the accident happened. I wasn't able to finish it, because I wasn't able to work for almost a year after that. It turned out to be not a very good movie. They'd say, "You went to extremes to get out of making a not-so-very-good movie!" (Laughs) Not so! Not so!

SS: Unfortunately, you didn't win the Oscar for best supporting actress, but Crawford won best actress. What can you tell us about that night?

AB: It was exciting! It certainly was for me, to be at Grauman's Chinese Theater. My mother and I both attended. Of course, I heard that Joan wasn't going to be there. I planned that, if Joan won, I would go out to her house in West Los Angeles to congratulate her. And that's exactly what I did!

SS: There's still such immense interest in *MILDRED PIERCE*. A script recently sold for over \$7,000.

AB: I'd heard that. I have one, too—and I wouldn't dream of selling it!

SS: To what do you attribute the film's cult status?

AB: I've no idea. I really have no idea. Well, that's part of why we do what we do—that mystery, that unknown quality about what we do, that we don't ever know. And that's not a bad thing. I don't think, if we had a blueprint for every day of our lives, that we'd necessarily be any happier. In fact I'm sure we might have a few more worries.

SS: Of your many movies, have you a particular favorite?



Ann Blyth

AB: Oh, my. Every actor is asked that question—and *MILDRED PIERCE* certainly has to be up there on the top of the list—but I've been lucky. I've done so many other movies that I really enjoyed doing, and I've been able to go back to the theater, which I thoroughly enjoy. Now I'm doing some concert work. It's very difficult to pinpoint any one time in your life when you felt that it was the best time, because I feel that now is the best time of my life. I'm doing things that I really enjoy—and it's wonderful.

SS: You made your Broadway debut in Lillian Hellman's *WATCH ON THE RHINE*, and later you played Regina in the screen version of Hellman's *ANOTHER PART OF THE FOREST*.

AB: Which was another one of my favorite roles. Again, with a marvelous cast of people: Fredric March, Florence Eldridge, Edmund

O'Brien, Dan Duryea. Wonderful experience! If you can't learn from being with people like that, then I don't think it possible to learn anything! We really became that family.

SS: Did you know Hellman?

AB: I'd met her, obviously, when I was cast in *WATCH ON THE RHINE*. I was so young; I didn't know who she was, really. I didn't know how important a playwright she was. I remember seeing her and Herman Shumlin when they came to the professional school that I went to in New York. They were looking for a young girl to play the daughter. I

was having lunch in the cafeteria and saw these two people looking across the room, and the principal's secretary came over and said, "Miss Hellman and Mr. Shumlin would like to speak with you"—and that was the beginning of it.

SS: Playing Regina, you were following in Bette Davis' footsteps, since Davis had played the older Regina in the film version of *THE LITTLE FOXES*. Did you find the role at all daunting?

AB: Oh, I found the role wonderful. When I was still in New York, a very young girl, Bette Davis was certainly an actress whose work I admired. I thought, "Some day, wouldn't it be wonderful to play parts like that?" And here I was! Wonderful!

SS: You appeared in a fantasy film for Universal, *MR. PEABODY AND THE MERMAID*. Was it difficult to act in a mermaid suit?

AB: (Laughs) No. Keeping warm and having to just stay put, as it were, all day long—that was the hardest part. Working with William Powell was a dream. He was a darling man.

SS: He was marvelous as Nick Charles in the *Thin Man* movies.

AB: Yes—and even as we watch those, there's just a niceness about him. A decency. There is a certain quality that seems to come through. It has nothing to do with acting; it's just a person's innate character that I think really can't be hidden. It just seems to shine through.

SS: *I'LL NEVER FORGET YOU* was another fantasy, in which Tyrone Power travels through time to find you in the 18th century.

AB: I adored working with Ty. We did the film in London, and he was very special, very special indeed. They had already started filming,

*Continued on page 109*



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# Better Holmes and Watson

## The Granada Series Reviewed

"My collection of M's is a fine one," said he. "Moriarty himself is enough to make any letter illustrious, and here is Morgan the poisoner, and Merridew of abominable memory, and Mathews, who knocked out my left canine in the waiting-room at Charing Cross, and, finally, here is our friend of tonight."

—"The Empty House"

The "friend" is Sebastian Moran, colonel in Her Majesty's Indian Army, big-game hunter, card sharp, author of *Heavy Game of the Western Himalayas* and *Three Months in the Jungle*, second-in-command in James Moriarty's society of villains—and a black-guard second only to his professorial superior in the number of times he's turned up in pastiches and adaptations of the Canon.

Moran is present in but one of Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes adventures ("The Empty House", published by *Collier's* and *The Strand Magazine* in 1903 and collected later that year in *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*), but his name pops up in *The Valley of Fear* (1914) and the title story of *His Last Bow* (1917). He is also present in spirit in "The Mazarin

Stone" (published in *The Strand* in 1921, collected six years later in *The Case-Book of Sherlock Holmes*), and for a very interesting reason: The story, considered by many to be the worst Conan Doyle ever penned, was adapted by the author from his 1921 play *THE CROWN DIAMOND*, in which Moran was billed as "an intellectual criminal". The shikari having long since kept a date with the hangman's noose, Moran became Count Negretto Sylvius for the purposes of "The Mazarin Stone"—an ignominious end for an intriguing character.

Nor did the Colonel fare so well in John Gardner's *The Return of Moriarty* (1974); he was dispatched by the Professor himself when the Napoleon of Crime got it into his mastermind that the imprisoned Moran would very likely spill some criminal beans. In Carole Nelson Douglas' *Irene at Large* (1992), the murderous old reprobate matched wits with a woman capable of outsmarting even the "unbeatable" Sherlock Holmes: Irene Adler. Needless to say, he finished very badly.

On film, Moran showed his scowling mug in 1931's *THE SLEEPING CARDINAL* (played by Louis Goodrich), 1935's *THE TRIUMPH OF SHER-*



Jeremy Brett

LOCK HOLMES (Wilfred Caithness), and 1937's *SILVER BLAZE* (Arthur Goulet), all three starring Arthur Wontner as the Great Detective, and brightened the penultimate Basil Rathbone starrer, 1946's *TERROR BY NIGHT*, in the portly person of character actor Alan Mowbray. (Working on the side of the angels, Mowbray had played another colonel—Gore-King—in 1932's *SHERLOCK HOLMES*, and was Inspector Lestrade in 1933's *A STUDY IN SCARLET*.)

Rounding out the Colonel's appearances: *THE EMPTY HOUSE* (a 1921 film with Sidney Seaward as Moran), *THE RETURN OF SHERLOCK HOLMES* (a 1923 play with Lauderdale Maitland), *THE RETURN OF SHERLOCK HOLMES* (a 1929 film with Donald Crisp), and *THE EMPTY HOUSE* (a 1951 television adaptation with Eric Maturin).

### THE EMPTY HOUSE

Adaptation: John Hawkesworth  
Direction: Howard Baker

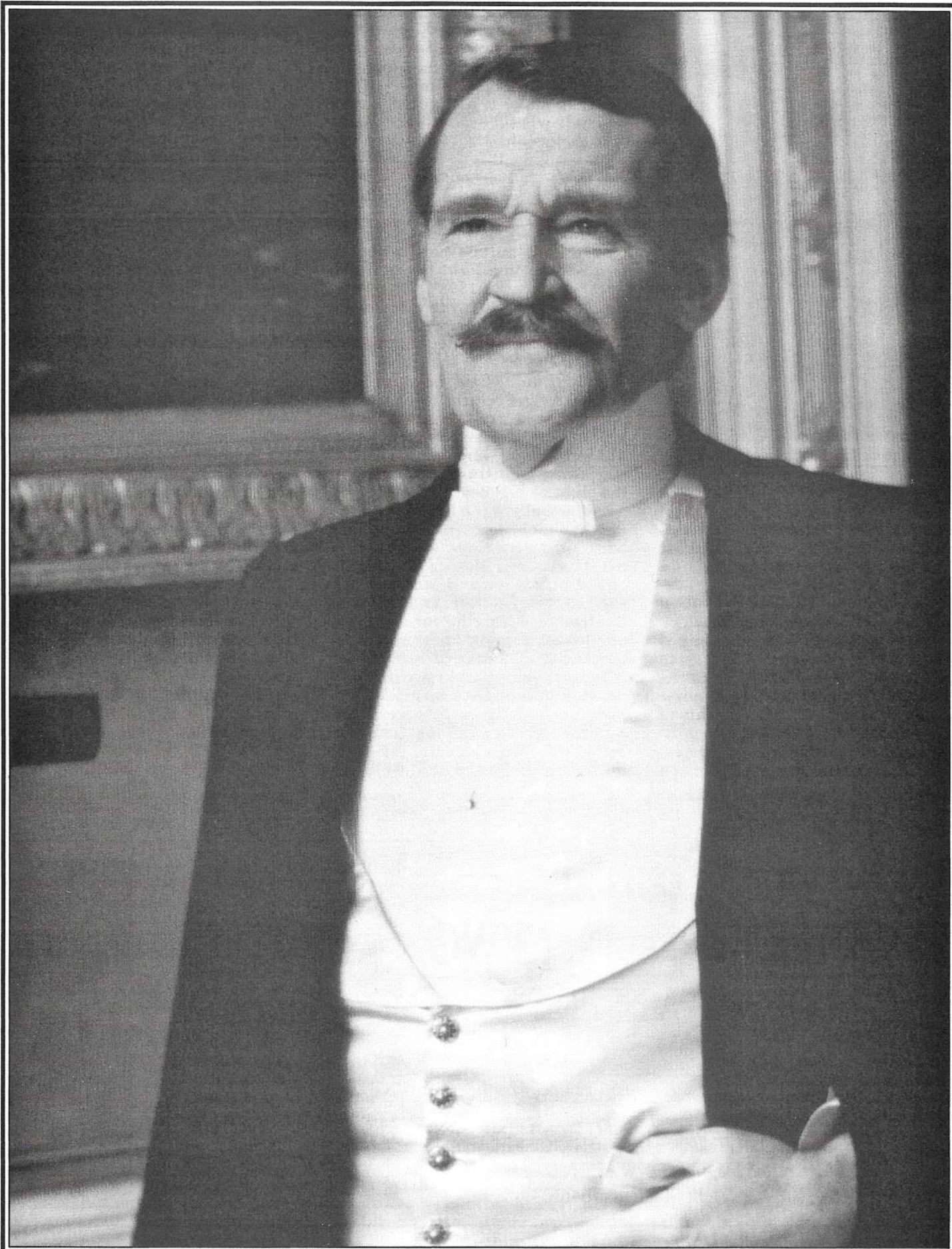
If nothing else, Granada's version of "The Empty House" would be notable for the fine Moran of Patrick Allen, but it also proved a turning point for the entire series: It is the first episode to air in which Edward Hardwicke took over the role of Dr. John H. Watson from David Burke. (Hardwicke had filmed *THE ABBEY GRANGE* some time earlier.)

Good as Burke was—and he was very good, indeed—Hardwicke is a revelation in the part, and the first seven episodes of the retitled series

**BELOW:** Inspector Lestrade (Colin Jeavons) and Dr. Watson (Edward Hardwicke) give evidence at an inquest into the murder of the Honourable Ronald Adair. **NEXT PAGE:** Colonel Sebastian Moran (Patrick Allen) was the second most dangerous man in London—until Professor Moriarty died.











Sherlock Holmes Disguised!

(THE RETURN OF SHERLOCK HOLMES) are arguably the finest Granada ever produced. (It's no accident that they also mark the most use the series has made of Colin Jeavons' definitive Inspector Lestrade.) Much of THE EMPTY HOUSE is taken up with restoring Sherlock Holmes to life, but in subsequent episodes the playing of Hardwicke and Jeremy Brett sheds light on the Holmes/Watson relationship as never before. Clearly this is a Watson whose purpose it is to keep the brilliant but emotionally-fragile detective from shattering, whose function

it is to provide the warmth and friendship (and, indeed, love) that Holmes simultaneously craves and fears. Brett is often accused of going "over the top" as Holmes, but, in order to make it all work, that is precisely what the series—and Hardwicke's level-headed, knowing Watson—requires. It is an inspired partnership, a study in subtext.

The story was meant by Conan Doyle to be little more than a means of resurrecting Holmes, whom the disgruntled author had callously bumped off in a fight to the finish with Moriarty in 1893's "The Final Problem", but it turned out to be more than merely serviceable—and Granada makes it better still. Learning of the murder of the Honourable Ronald Adair (Paul Lacoux), The Late Detective returns to London to put Adair's killer—Colonel Sebastian Moran, the last active member of Moriarty's gang—behind bars. Watson learns (shortly after fainting at the sight of Holmes) that his friend never actually did a header into the Reichenbach; instead, Holmes has been hiding for three years, biding his time until the day when he could at last remand Moran to the rope. A trap is set and sprung, Lestrade collars the colonel, and our heroes once again set up house-keeping at 221B Baker Street.

Scripter John Hawkesworth, who developed the series for television, provides viewers with several delightful scenes and innovations. He brings Watson in early, the good doctor (who misses, not only his

friend, but the thrill of their many shared adventures) acting in an official capacity for Scotland Yard. (This also has the advantage of giving Lestrade more to do, including a charming moment in which he waxes nostalgic over Holmes.) Once the detective returns, we return via flashback to Reichenbach and a final encounter with the fine Moriarty of Eric Porter. Taking center stage, Patrick Allen's Moran is all heartiness and chin, whether he is cheating at cards, lying in the dock, or readying a diabolical air gun (constructed by Von Herder, a blind German, on the orders of the Professor) to blow Holmes' brains out.

Perhaps best of all, THE EMPTY HOUSE gives Mrs. Hudson (played to sheer perfection by Rosalie Williams) her grandest moments, the landlady initially beside herself with joy at the sight of her beloved (if vexatious) lodger, then taking an active part in the detective's plan to capture Moran, then straightening up the sitting room to the point of retrieving the bullet fired by the air gun, then serving a bit of the bubbly by way of celebration....

It is to Mrs. Hudson that Hawkesworth gives the story's final lines, spoken in the original by the world's first consulting detective: "Once again Mr. Sherlock Holmes is free to devote his life to examining those interesting little problems which the complex life of London so plentifully presents."

Cheers!

—Richard Valley

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# Doctor in the House

## *Edward Hardwicke*

### Interviewed by Steven Eramo

No one should be surprised to read that the origins of many of today's TV detective partnerships can be traced back to the pen and paper of Scottish writer Sir Arthur Conan Doyle. In creating the characters of Sherlock Holmes and Doctor John H. Watson, the writer laid down the blueprint for future writers to develop their own pairs of crime-solving "bookends", albeit not always matching ones.

Perhaps destiny guided Edward Hardwicke to the role of Dr. John H. Watson in Granada Television's Sherlock Holmes series. His late father, Sir Cedric Hardwicke, portrayed Holmes in a BBC radio production in 1945. Sir Cedric was also a great friend of Nigel Bruce, who played Watson opposite Basil Rathbone's Holmes in 14 films between 1939 and 1946.

Born in North London in 1932, Hardwicke has lived there much of his life, except for a short period spent in the United States. "My father, Sir Cedric Hardwicke, was under contract to RKO," recalls the actor, "and I spent four or five years in Hollywood. I recall the time very clearly. They were important years in one's life, between the ages of six to about 12. Sadly, I've not been back since."

As a boy, Hardwicke entertained ideas of becoming either a train engineer or conductor. This he attributes to an early form of actor's exhibitionism. "My ambition in those days was to be, not an actor, but a comedian. My great heroes were comics. One in particular, Sid Fields, I discovered when I came back to England as a teenager. No connection to W. C. Fields, I have to say. He was a man who spent many years touring vaudeville theaters in this country and then quite late in life—in middle age, certainly—was brought to London in three famous variety shows, which were a huge

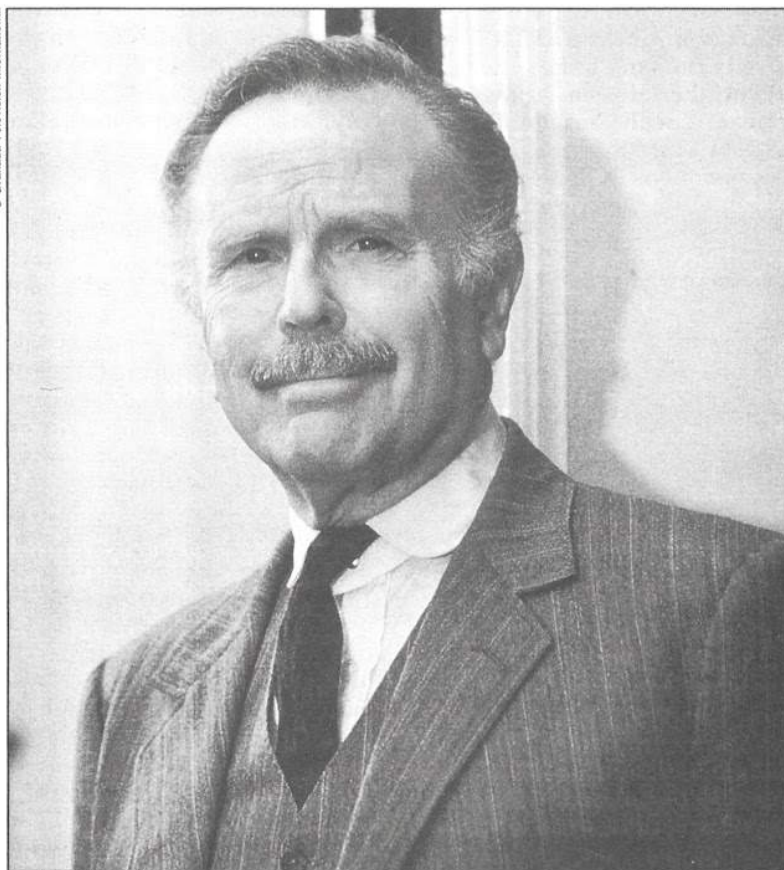
success. I remember my father took me to see him, and I became absolutely addicted and went night after night. I would laugh to the point that I couldn't watch the stage! He was definitely the funniest man I'd ever seen, and that became my ambition; I wanted to be a comic. I loved musicals and to be a comic actor in a musical seemed to me to be the ultimate.

"The other great hero of my childhood was Danny Kaye. On one famous occasion, he played the Palladium, and Sid Fields happened to be in the wings watching the performance. Danny Kaye dragged him on stage

and between them they did a sort of comic improvisation, which went something like two hours beyond the normal running time of the show. It received an hysterical ovation from everybody and is a famous incident in the Palladium's history. I always regret that, sadly, I wasn't there. They were both great heroes of mine and a big influence on my early days as a youngster."

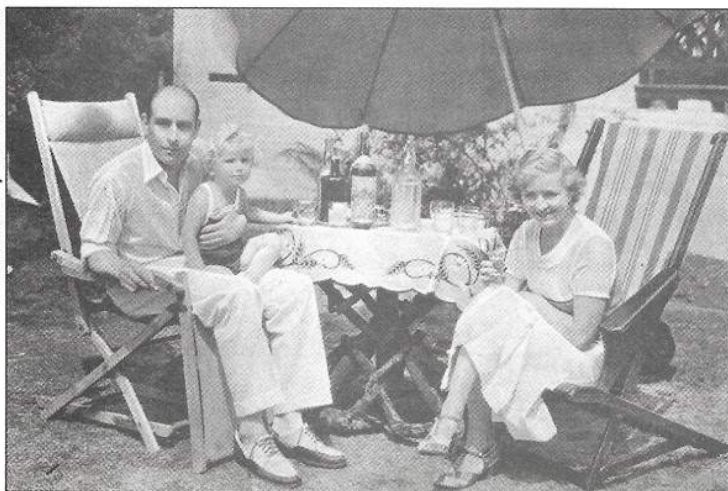
The actor made his film debut as a child, playing a small role in *A GUY NAMED JOE* (1943), starring Spencer Tracy. He returned to England and began his training with London's Royal Academy of Dramatic Art. Graduating, he went on to play at the Oxford and Nottingham Playhouses, as well as with the Bristol Old Vic Theatre Company: "I spent the first three years of my career in

repertory at the Bristol Old Vic," recalls Hardwicke. "It was a three-weekly repertory company. You did one play, rehearsed the next for three weeks, and then played for three weeks. The first play I was in was a production of *MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING*. I was playing the friar, which is not a very big part, but one of the actors playing Claudio was taken ill. Repertory companies don't have understudies, so I was got out of my digs at



Edward Hardwicke as Doctor John H. Watson





**LEFT:** The young Edward Hardwicke sits on the lap of his father, the noted actor Sir Cedric Hardwicke. Edward's mother, Helena, looks on. **RIGHT:** Edward appeared opposite Rex Harrison in 1968's *A FLEA IN HER EAR*, the film version of a famous Feydeau farce. Hardwicke's first love has always been comedy.

midnight and told I was going to have to go on for this particular actor in the matinée the next day.

"I look back in some amazement, as I actually learnt the part between midnight and the matinée the next day. I managed to go on stage the next day and get through the whole thing. I shudder to think how I did it. As it happens, it was the one and only time my father ever saw me act, so it was a doubly eventful afternoon for me."

In 1962, Hardwicke appeared at the Saville Theatre in Peter Ustinov's *PHOTO FINISH* and, in 1964, he joined the National Theatre, which was in its first season. He worked almost exclusively with the company until 1971, appearing in such productions as *THE CRUCIBLE*,

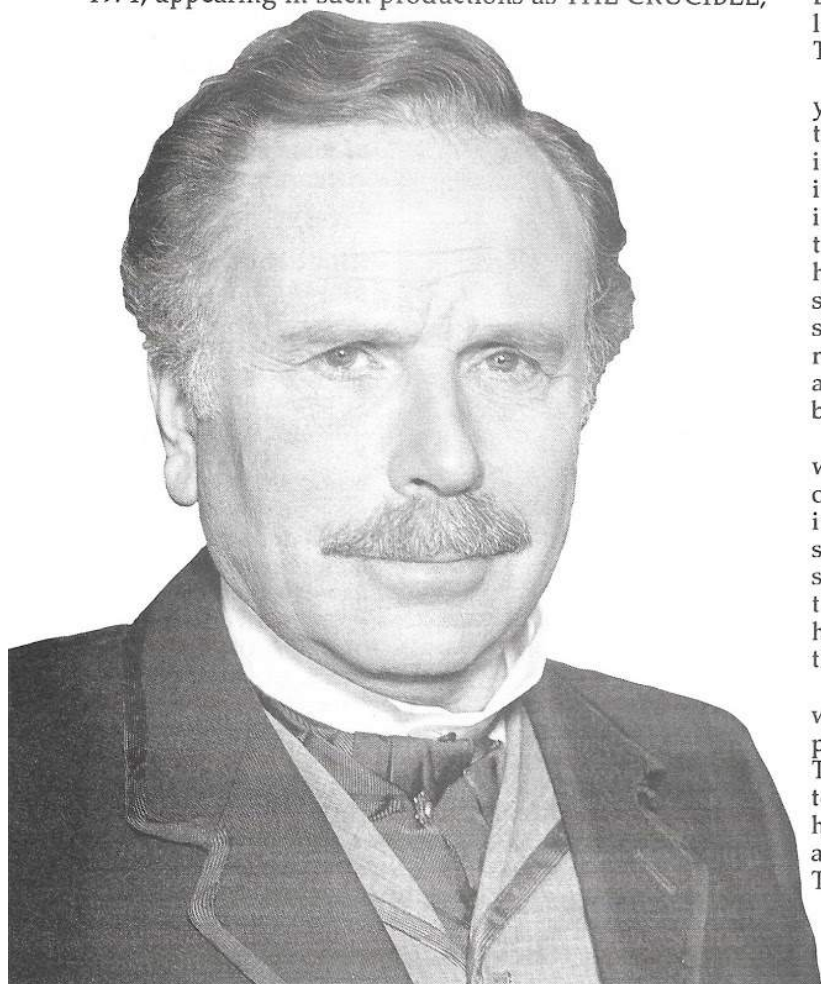
*THE MASTER BUILDER*, *ROSENCRANTZ AND GUILDENSTERN ARE DEAD*, and *OTHELLO*. "The seven years I spent with the National Theatre while Sir Laurence Olivier was running it were probably the most memorable years of my acting life," says the actor.

Besides his work with the National, Hardwicke appeared in *ON APPROVAL* at the Royal Haymarket in 1976; *AN IDEAL HUSBAND* in 1977 at Guildford, Surrey; and in 1979 performed at the Piccadilly Theatre in *CAN YOU HEAR ME AT THE BACK?* His film credits include *THE DAY OF THE JACKAL* (1973), *THE ODD JOB* (1978), and *BABY... SECRET OF THE LOST LEG-END* (1985). The actor has also worked on several popular British TV dramas, including *THE PALLISERS*, *LYTTON'S DIARY*, *LOVEJOY*, and *DRUMMONDS*.

Of the many characters he has portrayed over the years, is there one he has found most difficult or particularly challenging? "I just think everything you do is really challenging," answers Hardwicke. "I do think it's true that most actors find that whatever they are doing at any particular moment is the most difficult thing. There's always that terrible period during rehearsals, or even during the early beginning part of shooting a film, where everything seems to be impossible. It's usually a result of, perhaps, working with a new group of people. All the old sort of doubts—an actor's paranoia—creep in. I really can't say that there's been anything in particular; they've all been difficult."

"There have been occasions, particularly when you're working in a company, that you're asked to play a variety of parts. This is one of the good things about working in a company, but it means that occasionally you get something that is, perhaps, outside your range. This stretches you in a way that seems, at the time, difficult to deal with. I suppose one would have to say that has happened on occasion, but I think it is true that most things that you do feel at the time impossible."

Hardwicke's involvement with Granada came about when David Burke decided that he did not want to reprise his role as Holmes' right-hand man in *THE RETURN OF SHERLOCK HOLMES*. Burke had the chance to join the Royal Shakespeare Company and work with his wife, actress Anna Calder-Marshall. The move would also give him more time to spend with his young son, Tom. The combination of work and private life was one





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LEFT: Edward Hardwicke and Jeremy Brett in *THE MEMOIRS OF SHERLOCK HOLMES*. CENTER: On location for *THE LAST VAMPYRE*. RIGHT: Hardwicke and Anthony Hopkins in *SHADOWLANDS* (1993).

Burke could not pass up. "The first 13 Sherlock Holmes episodes ended with *THE FINAL PROBLEM*," recalls Hardwicke. "At that point, Granada did not have any definite intention to continue with the series at all. In the meantime, David was offered the opportunity to go to Stratford-upon-Avon, together with his wife, and he felt that was something he did not want to let pass by."

"I happened to be working with David's wife at the time, and he immediately said, 'Look, you must do something about this, because I'm not going to be doing it. Get on to your agent.' And David himself very kindly rang Jeremy Brett, who I had known but not worked with at the National Theatre, and put the idea to him. So it was one of those accidents that happen in this business, which was very fortuitous for me."

Along with serving as Sherlock Holmes' friend and partner in crime-solving, the character of Watson is intended to represent the average man's intelligence. Thus it is the character's responsibility to communicate the more cerebral actions of Holmes to the audience. How would Hardwicke describe his character? "I think when people are cast in parts like Dr. Watson," says the actor, "you must assume to some extent that the people who are doing the casting see something in you which suggests that you could bring a quality to the part that they are looking for, so you have to go with that."

"Consciously, I felt it was important that one make it clear that Watson is a doctor, which is something I certainly couldn't do as a person. It requires a great deal of skill, and you have to be fairly intelligent. I also think that being a doctor is partially being a detective. People come to you and say 'I have a pain here,' and you have to ask questions and discover what it is that's causing the problem. So he has that in common with Sherlock Holmes. The only other conscious thing I felt was important is that, with two people such as Holmes and Watson working together, there has to be a considerable amount of humor between the two men. The relationship simply couldn't exist without it."

"Beyond those two things, I felt that a great deal of the initial work was done in the first 13 episodes," explains Hardwicke, "both in the way Granada presents the series, the detail and the period atmosphere that

they created, and in the way David Burke rethought, or was encouraged to rethink, the whole way Watson was presented. One simply stepped into that already well-defined approach to the stories, and while it was somewhat nerve-wracking, because you did not want to rock the boat, the work was already done to some extent."

Holmes and Watson have faced a number of ruthless adversaries in their fight against the criminal element. While most of these opponents have been human in form, others have included a deadly poisonous snake, a hallucination-inducing drug of death, and even a Hound of Hell. It is his meeting with the latter that Hardwicke considers one of his favorite episodes. "The thing about doing a series like this, particularly when you get to a certain stage in this business, is that in every single film there's nearly always an actor or actors whom you've worked with before. It's like constantly having a party with your old friends. There are episodes I've had enormous pleasure from because one's been working with chums, and there's been a lot of laughter. You wake up every morning thinking how lucky we are to be on a job which we enjoy and which we are paid to do."

"I'm thinking in particular of *THE HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES*, which I don't think was particularly successful as a film, for all sorts of reasons, sadly—but as a piece of work, individual performances and things, I had enormous pleasure from it. Not only did I work with people I already knew, including Ronald Pickup, who was at the National Theatre while I was there, and James Faulkner, whom I knew, but I made friends with an actor called Alastair Duncan, as well as Kristoffer Tabori, the American actor who played Baskerville. It was just a thoroughly enjoyable few weeks."

"As to a story, I thought *THE DEVIL'S FOOT* was a tremendously interesting story. It combines all the things I think make the Conan Doyle stories interesting. You have the idea of the kind of Gothic, almost supernatural happenings, which are then explained scientifically. So you get two things that seem to be part of the Victorian/Edwardian era in this country, which was the love affair with the Gothic, strange and slightly supernatural, and the love affair with science. I think the Conan Doyle stories combine these two elements, and that's



what makes them so successful. *THE DEVIL'S FOOT*, like *THE HOUND*, is a wonderful example of those two forces coming together and producing a damn good yarn."

Along with the criminal element, the intrepid detective and the good doctor have met up with a host of eccentric characters, both fictional and real, who have helped and hindered their investigations. Some of these encounters have taken directors by surprise, especially when they aren't even in the script! "In *THE LAST VAMPYRE*, we were filming in a very picturesque village in the Cotswolds," recalls Hardwicke, "and Jeremy and I had a scene walking down the main road in the village, doing a dialogue with a camera on a crane some distance away. Suddenly I realized that Jeremy had stopped, and I looked up and we were confronted by this man. He said to Jeremy, 'Hello, I'm General So-and-so; welcome to our village. You picked a good day for it.' And he went into this dialogue about his village while the camera was still turning. Unfortunately, the sound had been switched off by this time, but it was fairly amusing."

Besides their work as Holmes and Watson on the small screen, both actors brought their characters to life on the stage. *THE SECRET OF SHERLOCK HOLMES*, written by Jeremy Paul (who penned many of the TV adaptations), gave the actors an opportunity to show audiences more of the friendship and bond between the characters. What differences did Hardwicke find in playing Watson on stage as opposed to in front of a camera? "The essential difference is the difference between theater and film," says Hardwicke. "In theater you go to a particular place at a certain time of day. Somebody turns the lights out and you do a play in front of a live audience. In this instance, I think the big difference was the play was very much to do with Jeremy. He commissioned the play and his intention was to explore—albeit a fictional rela-

tionship with fictional characters—the relationship between Holmes and Watson. In other words, to be inside the room looking out, rather than outside looking in. The cases that they were dealing with became a background, and the central theme was the relationship between the two men.

"It was interesting, because there was a great deal of invention from the writer, Jeremy Paul, which concerned the period after 'The Final Problem' and before Holmes reappears, in which Watson was left to wonder what on Earth happened to his friend. Paul had some very interesting ideas about that, and they all come out when Holmes returns. They fall into a discussion that concerns Moriarty and all sorts of things. We were dealing with the relationship rather than simply with cases."

Hardwicke recently completed work on a new set of Holmes adventures that aired on British TV in March. He has also worked on a feature-film adaptation of the play *SHADOWLANDS* with Sir Anthony Hopkins and Debra Winger. The play explores the relationship between English writer C. S. Lewis and his American wife, Joy Davidman, who subsequently falls ill and dies during their marriage. Hardwicke was cast as the author's brother. "It's been a wonderful experience," he says. "I knew Tony Hopkins from the days at the National Theatre, so to some extent we're old friends. Debra Winger is a wonderfully funny lady. Sir Richard Attenborough is directing it, and he's created a most wonderful atmosphere on the set. He's a remarkable man.

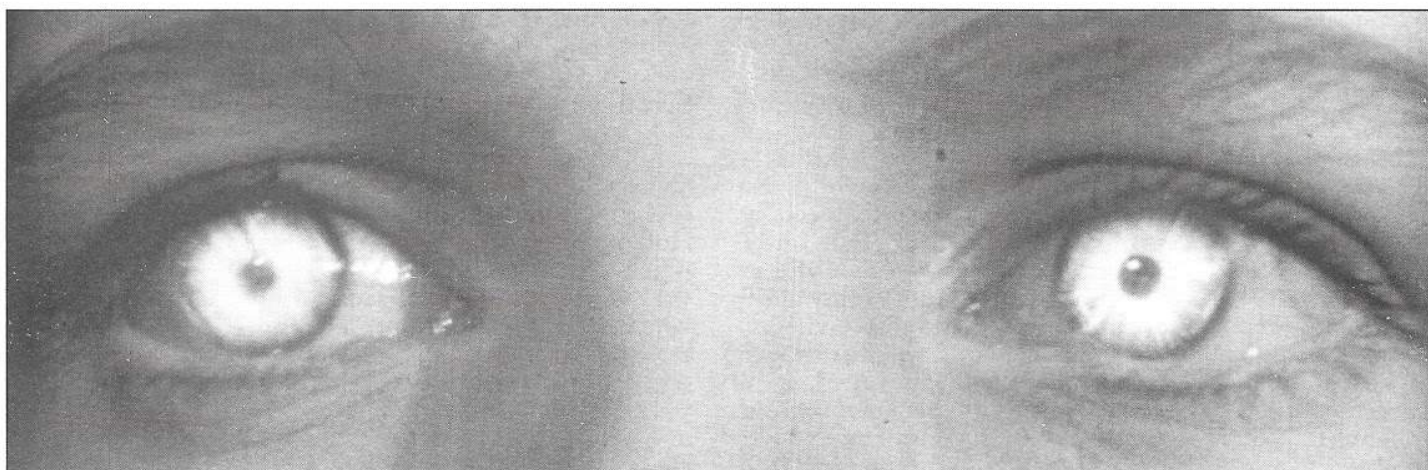
"Beyond this, I have no idea. I'm an actor who just enjoys the next job that comes along," he laughs. "This business is going through a very difficult time in this country at the moment. I don't think it's any different in America. I'm sure it's been a very difficult period for every part of our business, and one can only hope that things get better. One has to keep hoping that it will." ¶

When Edward Hardwicke missed filming on *THE GOLDEN PINCE-NEZ*, Charles Gray stepped in as Sherlock's brother, Mycroft Holmes. When Jeremy Brett missed filming on *THE MAZARIN STONE*, Gray stepped in again.

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—John Wyndham, *The Midwich Cuckoos*

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The 12 offspring, nearly identical platinum blondes, don't resemble their human dads (if any). The Children grow abnormally fast. They're telepathic and freakishly smart. Traditional childrearing practices don't work with this lot. They never play with the normal kids, who

loathe and fear them. Emotionless, the Children behave with polite indifference, showing no special respect for adults. Worse, they lack any moral scruples or sense of proportion, and can control other people's behavior. Anyone who thwarts the Children ends up injured or dead.

That's what happens in the isolated English country village of Midwich in *VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED*. Wolf Rilla directed this 1960 film, based on John Wyndham's novel *The Midwich Cuckoos*, published in 1957. In 1963, Anton M. Leader directed *CHILDREN OF THE DAMNED*. It's less a sequel than a parallel story, set in the global village, London's Embassy Row at the height of the Cold War. Both films reflect a society at an awkward age, between the confident conformity of the 1950s and the social upheaval soon to explode in the 1960s, the era of the Generation Gap, when parents feared losing control of their kids.

In the novel and in both films, scientists theorize that aliens deposited the Children in human wombs, the way cuckoos lay their eggs in the nests of host birds. Aside from some vague mumbo-jumbo about mysterious beams



from outer space, neither Wyndham nor the filmmakers explain how it was done. An elderly scientist, Professor Gruber (Martin Miller), discovers in *CHILDREN OF THE DAMNED* that the Children's cells probably took over normal human cells in the womb. He concludes that the strange cells are "those of man, advanced maybe a million years".

The Children join a long cinematic tradition of scary kids, including the little darlings who inform on their parents in the 1956 film *1984*, the youngsters who side with the alien in 1958's *THE SPACE CHILDREN*, the unhappy experiments of 1962's *THESE ARE THE DAMNED*, and, most memorably, Patty McCormick's outstanding performance as a murderous moppet in 1956's *THE BAD SEED*. In 1962's *THE INNOCENTS* (based on Henry James' novel, *The Turn of the Screw*), a governess believes evil ghosts to have corrupted an innocent girl and boy (another outstanding performance by Martin Stephens, who at age 11 played David Zellaby, the leader of the Children in *VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED*). The tradition continues with *ROSEMARY'S BABY* (1968), the many *OMEN* sequels, and a schoolyard of imitators.

To enhance the impression of alienness in *VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED*, Eric Aylott designed blonde wigs to make the Children's foreheads appear to bulge slightly, as if those delicate skulls concealed unusually large frontal lobes. When the Children use their powers, their eyes glow, a simple but striking effect that Tom Howard (photographic effects) created by cutting a negative print in over the positive, turning the irises nearly white.

Rilla thought this effect seemed contrived, but used it because the producer wanted it. The glowing eyes appear only in American prints of *VILLAGE*. John Bros-

nan speculates in *Future Tense: The Cinema of Science Fiction*, (St. Martin's Press, 1978) that British censors objected to the effect. It seems odd that censors would ban something so innocuous while passing disturbing scenes in which the Children force adults to hurt or kill themselves. Leader uses a similar eye effect in *CHILDREN OF THE DAMNED*, but without the blonde wigs.

Nobody in either film learns why the Children have come to Earth. In *VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED*, when scientist and teacher Gordon Zellaby (George Sanders) asks, the Children give him a blank stare. Either they aren't telling or they don't know. In *CHILDREN OF THE DAMNED*, when psychologist Tom Lewellin (Ian Hendry) asks, "Why are you here, Paul? What do you want?" the boy (Clive Powell) answers, in the hollow voice of a lost soul, "We don't know." In both films, though the Children may have no evil intent, they cause havoc.

In *Midwich*, the Children inspire xenophobic tribalism, tinged with anti-intellectualism. Some of the men take out their anger at being cuckolded on their innocent wives and hate the Children even before they're born. The film presents men in a way unusually unsympathetic for the period. Many of the fathers care more about their wounded masculine pride than they do about their families' welfare. While the women give birth, husbands and boyfriends drift to the local pub. They can't talk things over or even meet each other's eyes. In the oppressive silence, one man throws darts at the board with a mechanical, stupefied wrath.

Over the years, as the Children's power grows, this outrage deepens into a lethal mixture of anger and fear. Baby David Zellaby compels his screaming mother (Barbara Shelley) to put her hand repeatedly into boiling water, just because she gave him a bottle that was too warm. Years later, when a care-







Major Bernard and the Zellabys (Michael Gwynne, Barbara Shelley, and George Sanders) witness one of the Children's mind-control murders, that of Thomas Heathcoate (James Pawle), in *VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED* (1960).

less driver bumps into one of them, the Children force him to run his car head-on into a wall. When another man aims a rifle at them, they make him shoot himself.

Government scientists consider imprisoning the Children for public safety. Similar Children, born elsewhere in the world, have all been killed. The British government defers action to let Gordon Zellaby, David's nominal father, study the Children in a special boarding school. Zellaby believes that the Children can learn to fit into society and that society may gain valuable knowledge from them. Meanwhile, the men of Midwich plot to burn the school. David steps outside to face the mob. His strange, otherworldly eyes light up. Unable to resist the compulsion, the mob leader sets himself on fire.

As the violence escalates, Zellaby sadly concludes that the Children are an alien invasion force, who eventually will grow strong enough to take over the Earth. Without telling anyone what he's doing, because the Children might read someone's thoughts and stop him, he sends his wife and her brother away to safety, then smuggles a time bomb into the school to kill the Children before they gain complete control.

*CHILDREN OF THE DAMNED* expands these themes from families to nations. The father figures become paternalistic governments, trying to turn another group of



Children into weapons of the Cold War. *CHILDREN OF THE DAMNED* opens with a team of British UNESCO scientists studying Paul, a brilliantly intelligent boy played by Clive Powell. The psychologist, Tom Lewellin (Ian Hendry), and the geneticist, David Neville (Alan Badel), learn that five more Children like Paul, all the same age, live in other parts of the world.

These Children aren't as obvious, or as vulnerable, as the ones in Midwich, because their appearance blends in with the local populations where they were born, in China, Africa, Russia, India, America, and England. (Casting director Irene Howard added credibility by hiring children from appropriate ethnic groups, although these young actors lack the intensity of the group directed by Wolf Rilla.) Their ordinary looks are just camouflage, however, because these Children share the same strange powers as the Midwich Cuckoos.

As David Neville puts it, Paul didn't get his brains from his mother (Sheila Allen), a dim bulb. A virgin when she got pregnant, she's haunted by the stigma of bearing a bastard. She's not smart enough to cope with Paul. Now she's recuperating in hospital because, when she told Paul she hated him and intended to cooperate

*Continued on page 68*

In 1963's *CHILDREN OF THE DAMNED*, Rashid (Mahdu Mathen) is murdered, only to rise again and stand with his alien companions. Barbara Ferris played the sympathetic Susan Eliot.



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# Another Damned Movie!

Interview by  
Marie E. Kraushaar

Twenty-five years after the death of its author, *Re-Birth*, the title of a 1955 science-fiction novel by John Wyndham, may turn out to be prophetic. The British writer (real name: John Benyon Harris), who counted among his works *The Day of the Triffids* (1951), *The Kraken Wakes* (1953), *The Midwich Cuckoos* (1957), and *Chocky* (1968), is himself experiencing a rebirth of sorts, at least as far as the movies are concerned: *THE DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS* (made on the cheap in 1963 with stars Howard Keel, Nicole Maurey, Janette Scott, and Kieron Moore) and *VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED* (the 1960 reworking of *The Midwich Cuckoos*) are both heating up as film projects, the latter with John Carpenter set to direct. Both projects are the result of years of negotiation by Ted Vernon and Michael Preger, whose Vernon/Preger Productions has snared the rights to Wyndham's cautionary tales of alien tykes and ambulatory plants.

Recently, *Scarlet Street* spoke to Michael Preger about what the producer must hope will not be "just another DAMNED movie . . ."

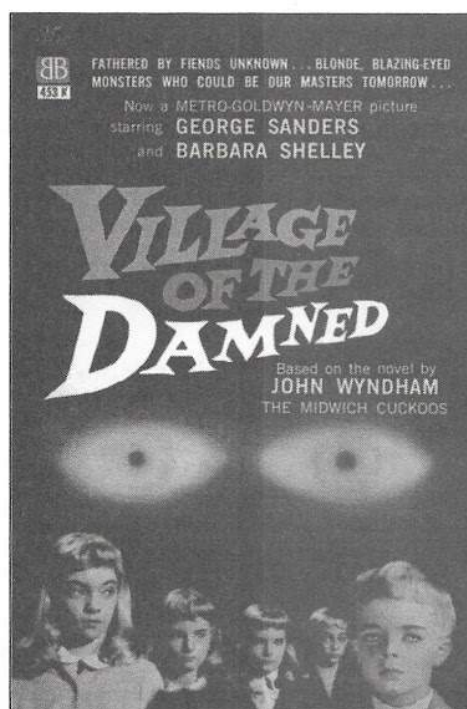
*Scarlet Street: Why this sudden surge of interest in John Wyndham?*

**Michael Preger:** Well, I'm not sure that it's so sudden. My partner, Ted Vernon, and I have spent a lot of time and money getting the project together. These films were divided over the years in terms of copyright; certain portions of the rights fell back to the Wyndham estate, and other parts stayed with the studios. Because the studios didn't control the entire copyright, they pushed them off to the sidelines when they were looking for projects to remake, because it was going to take time and effort to clean up the copyright situation. Essentially, that's what Ted and I have worked on for the last few years. We've now got the rights back together again, and the studios were pretty quick to respond.

**SS:** *The original VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED and DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS were both inexpensive films.*

**MP:** I'm sure we'll have higher budgets. The budget for *VILLAGE* right now is \$12 to \$15 million. For *TRIFFIDS*, we haven't yet finished our studio deal. One proposal we have out is for a high-budget project with director Tom Holland. We have a low-budget proposal as well, with George Romero directing.

**SS:** *VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED used special effects very sparingly. Will the remake be flashier?*



**MP:** Well, it's not going to be an effects-driven film. Obviously we will have much more elaborate special effects than those used in the original, but the concept and script, under John Carpenter's direction, is not for a "special effects" film. We're going to remain very heavy with the story and characters.

**SS:** *DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS contains more opportunities for effects, including a worldwide meteor shower. The original suffered from its limited budget.*

**MP:** Ours will depend upon which budget we use. With the Tom Holland screenplay, which is the high-budget project, there are extensive special effects. It's really taking it to the max; we're looking for a minimum \$30 million just to get it underway. The low-budget would

probably be in the \$12 million range. That's a much smaller story, if that's the project that ends up taking root.

**SS:** *Aptly put.*

**MP:** I haven't seen that screenplay. I've talked with George Romero's people about the project, and they're planning on doing it in a very small, isolated-town situation. Tom Holland bases his screenplay in San Francisco with major special effects—San Francisco burning in the background, a train smashing into the station. It's a brilliant script, but the studios get a little antsy about spending that kind of money in this genre. That's been the struggle with getting Tom's script placed. Even though we had it in development at Universal, they eventually shied away from it for that reason. We'd love to see it done Tom's way, but we have great faith in George Romero as well, and we currently have that package under review at Universal. Again, we haven't got an agreement yet, and we're not sure that it's going to be a deal.

**SS:** *In the 80s, John Carpenter's remake of THE THING was quite gory. Since gore is now out of favor, can we expect a less bloody approach to VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED?*

**MP:** Yes, I think so. Interestingly enough, without giving away too much, John has drawn very heavily from the original film. It's a new set of characters, new names and situations, new town—but as far as the underlying story, it's the same. We've gone through a number of screenplays with this. Originally, Tom Holland was working on it, and then Wes Craven—and finally John Carpenter. Each director took the concept in a different direction, and it was Carpenter who brought us back to the original story.

**SS:** *When do you hope to begin filming VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED?*

**MP:** Right now, Carpenter is finishing a project called *IN AND OUT OF MADNESS* for New Line Cinema. We expect he'll be finishing up in April or May, then he'll probably take a month off. We plan to begin preproduction by late summer and hope to start shooting by the end of the year.



## IF LOOKS COULD KILL

*Continued from page 66*

with the scientists who wanted to study him, he made her walk in front of a lorry.

Neville and Lewellin set up a program to study the five Children together, in London, but the Cold War spoils this plan. Each nation hides its "asset" in its embassy. Sinister British agent Colin Webster (Alfred Burke) snatches Paul from the protective care of his aunt, Susan Eliot (Barbara Ferris, looking lovely, though the character is a near-nonentity), who has taken over for the hospitalized mother. At first, it looks as if all the Children will be treated as sophisticated espionage tools. However, the governments soon realize that, because the Children read each other's thoughts, taking them into an embassy or military installation would mean the end of national security. The Russian Child knows everything the American Child learns, and vice versa.

Escaping from their embassies, the Children take Susan with them as teacher, surrogate mother, and hostage. They hole up in an abandoned Gothic church, a parallel to the isolated boarding school in which Gordon Zellaby teaches the Children in *VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED*. The ultimate misfits, the Children in both films become separated from society physically as well as mentally. They're under seige and they're doomed.

When Gordon Zellaby decides to kill the Children in *VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED*, the film improves on the novel by having Zellaby visualize a brick wall to prevent the Children from reading his mind. Some reviewers consider the wall to be too literal (in the novel, we're not told how he manages), but Zellaby can't simply will himself not to think about the bomb in his briefcase. (Try that old sophomoric experiment: Don't think about elephants.) The act of deciding not to think about the bomb would cause him to visualize it. (Remember, don't think about elephants.) He needs another image to occupy his mind instead.

The Children immediately realize that he's hiding something behind that wall. However, Zellaby has had the good sense to set his bomb to go off quickly, so his ruse doesn't have to work for very long. He and the Children die in the explosion and fire. Or do they? The viewer watches as the strange, glowing eyes, disembodied, streak out through the flames. Do the eyes represent death—souls in flight—or are those lost souls traveling somewhere else?

In *CHILDREN OF THE DAMNED*, a team of American agents, armed with machine guns, tries to kidnap the Children, "alive, if possible". The kids, however, have built themselves a mind-shattering defense system, a Rube Goldberg contraption that incorporates a music stand, the inner works of a radio, and the church organ. The machine seems to amplify the Children's thoughts. It draws power from sunlight focused through a piece of

stained glass removed from a church window. When the agents enter the church, the Children let loose a mighty blast of sound and vibration. The men who shoot and kill Rashid, the Indian child, die in agony. Geneticist David Neville, like Gordon Zellaby, has argued in favor of studying the Children, but all these deaths change his mind. Now he completely supports a plan to destroy the Children.

Lewellin persuades the Children to return to their embassies, talk with the adults, and try to find a peaceful solution to the situation. However, when the sinister Colin Webster tries to talk Paul into giving the weapon to England, Paul makes all the government bureaucrats in the room kill each other. The peace mission fails in all the embassies, and the Children return to their sanctuary. Though Lewellin still feels that it is possible for humans

and Children to learn to coexist, David persuades the governments to act fast. Delay is extremely risky when the kids already can muster such firepower.

At the last minute, with military forces ready to blow church and Children to smithereens, Ambassador Harib (Harold Goldblatt) dares to walk up the church steps, meet with the Children, and ask the crucial question again: "What is your purpose?" This time, Paul answers, "To be destroyed by you." Then Rashid, killed by the Americans, walks outside to join the others on the steps. The Children have raised him from the dead. David realizes that the Children, though dangerous, have no evil intent. Conscience-stricken, he and the others in charge decide that, despite the risk, they must try to work with the Children.

Then, in an echo of the Atomic Age fear of accidental war so much on people's minds in those days, a screwdriver, carelessly dropped, rolls down an instrument panel, trips a switch, and sends the signal

to begin the assault. The Children die as the church goes up in flames, an echo of the school burning down in the earlier film.

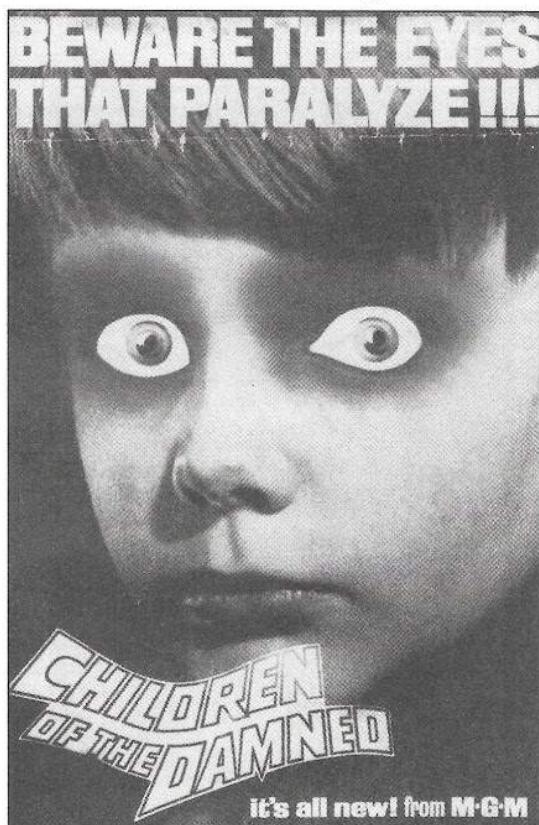
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I am working round again to cuckoos. Cuckoos are very determined survivors. So determined that there is really only one thing to be done with them once one's nest is infected . . .

—*The Midwich Cuckoos*

*VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED* was shot in six weeks, on a budget of only \$82,000! The lack of money shows sometimes, as in the cheesy-looking miniature of the burning school. However, both these atmospheric black-and-white films with their sad endings depend on intelligent scripts and excellent acting, not special effects.

Because of budget restraints and the desire to keep *VILLAGE* short (it's only 77 minutes), many of Wyndham's minor characters from the novel, especially the women, are lost, including a lesbian couple, whom Wyndham, unlike most writers of the 1950s, treats with







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LEFT: Barbara Shelley and George Sanders starred as Gordon and Anthea Zellaby, two residents of the VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED (1960). RIGHT: Martin Stephens as David Zellaby, pictured with another of the Children.

respect. However, Barbara Shelley gives a fine performance as Mrs. Zellaby, a composite of Gordon Zellaby's wife and daughter from the novel. Both women are stronger and more important in Wyndham's book: Mrs. Zellaby, for example, prevents hysteria in the town when the pregnancies are discovered, by giving a moving speech at a town meeting. She urges everyone to pull together and not ostracize unmarried women who are pregnant through no fault of their own. In VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED, however, as usual in sci-fi films of this era, the men do all the persuading and make all the decisions while the women stay quietly in the background.

Barbara Shelley, born in 1933, is nearly 30 years younger than George Sanders, her leading man, born in 1906. Eileen Sullivan (wardrobe) packs Shelley's attractive figure into tight little outfits inappropriate for English village life. If she and Sanders played their roles with less class and subtlety, the Zellabys easily could come across as a bimbo married to an old goat. Fortunately, the chemistry between Shelley and Sanders makes Gordon and Anthea Zellaby a real married couple, in love with each other, though reserved about showing it.

Although Shelley received generally favorable notices as Anthea Zellaby, Sanders got mixed reviews as Gordon. Even Sanders's sympathetic biographer, Richard VanDerBeets, considers this performance "respectable if uninspired", though "there are some affecting scenes between him and Shelley" (*An Exhausted Life*, Madison Books, 1990). The *Variety* reviewer "Rich" wrote, "Sanders wanders through the film with the air of a man who long

ago gave up wondering what the screenplay is all about" (June 29, 1960). Phil Hardy shares a common opinion that Sanders "gives a calculatingly icy performance" (*Encyclopedia of Science Fiction Movies*, Arum Press, 1984). One wonders whether Sanders' reputation might have influenced critics, since he was usually typecast as a suave villain. However, Zellaby isn't cold, just reserved, a genial but courageous professor, less absent-minded than he seems. Surely one wouldn't want to see actors chewing the scenery in this low-key film.

Sanders does some of his most subtle acting with Martin Stephens, particularly near the end of the film. Although Gordon has been the closest thing the Children have to a friend, now they begin to see him as a threat. Roles reverse: The Child summons the father. In one of the most chilling moments of the film, David comes into the room and commands, "Father, I want to talk to you." Zellaby tries to conceal his unease, but David sees through him, and Zellaby knows it.

Not many 11-year-olds could steal scenes from the veteran Sanders. Stephens and the other Children give remarkable, unchildlike performances throughout. Despite their rigid coldness, one can't help empathizing with the Children's isolation, especially in a scene wherein a normal child bounces a ball off the head of one of the girls, a humiliation all too familiar to anyone who knows what it feels like to be a schoolyard scapegoat.

Barbara Shelley gives Anthea Zellaby dignity and intelligence despite a dearth of good lines. Shelley and Sanders make a good scene out of stereotyped comedy when Anthea tells Gordon that she's pregnant. The delighted but befuddled husband reacts as if she were ill, first urging her to sit down, then offering her inappropriate com-

*Lelia Loban, a former investigative researcher, is a freelance writer and owns a stained-glass art studio in Virginia.*





Dr. David Neville (Alan Badel) studies Paul (Clive Powell) in *CHILDREN OF THE DAMNED* (1964).

forts, such as a drink, while she smiles tolerantly. It's hard to believe that anyone could watch this scene and write Gordon Zellaby off as cold-blooded.

Later, Anthea confesses to Gordon her mixed feelings: joy at the prospect of having a baby combined with fear of what might be growing inside her. In the novel, she's let off easily when her child turns out to be her husband's, not one of the Children. Her situation in the film is much more dramatic, since her David becomes the Children's leader. The viewer senses her confusion as she's packing his suitcase and preparing to send him to boarding school, when David responds coldly to her open affection. Anthea loves her child, but she's also afraid of him, and at the same time terribly sad about feeling that way.

In another well-acted scene at the end of the film, Anthea realizes why Gordon has sent her out of town with her brother, Alan (Michael Gwynne, another victim of costumer Eileen Sullivan, who dresses the actor in ill-fitting clothes that make his head look too small for his body). In the middle of a conversation, Anthea stops her car, a look of shock on her face as she realizes that Gordon's casual good-bye means that he intends to kill the Children and expects to die himself. He's trying to spare her by getting her out of the way. Immediately, she turns the car around to go back to him, just in time to witness the explosion. As courageous as her husband, Anthea seems more resigned than horrified.

*CHILDREN OF THE DAMNED* (for which the memorable catch phrase "Beware the Eyes That Paralyze" was coined) also benefits from intelligent, subtle performances by its stars. Film critic John Baxter has said that Tom Lewellin and David Neville "live together in what seems a loose homosexual relationship, and when the less domi-

## VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED

### Credits

1960, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, black and white. Director: Wolf Rilla. Producer: Ronald Kinnoch. Screenplay: Stirling Silliphant, Wolf Rilla, and "George Barclay" (pseudonym for Ronald Kinnoch). Based on the novel *The Midwich Cuckoos* by John Wyndham. Photography: Geoffery Faithful. Editor: Gordon Hales. Art Direction: Ivan King. Music: Ron Goodwin. Photographic Effects: Tom Howard. Production Manager: Denis Johnson. Second Unit Photography: Gerald Moss. Assistant Director: David Middlemas. Sound: A. W. Watkins. Hairstyles: Joan Johnstone. Makeup: Eric Aylott. Wardrobe: Eileen Sullivan. Locations scenes filmed at Letchmore Heath, England. Running time: 77 minutes.

### Cast

George Sanders (Gordon Zellaby), Barbara Shelley (Anthea Zellaby), Michael Gwynne (Major Alan Bernard), Laurence Naismith (Dr. Willers), John Phillips (General Leighton), Richard Vernon (Sir Edgar Hargraves), Jenny Laird (Mrs. Harrington), Richard Warner (Mr. Harrington), Thomas Heathcoat (James Pawle), Martin Stephens (David Zellaby), Charlotte Mitchell (Janet Pawle), Rosamond Greenwood (Miss Ogle), Alexander Archdale (Coroner), Bernard Archard (Vicar), Susan Richards (Mrs. Plumpton), Peter Vaughan (Constable Gobbey), Pamela Buck (Milly Hughes), John Stuart (Mr. Smith), Sheila Robins (Nurse), Keith Pyott (Dr. Carlisle), Sarah Long (Evelyn Harrington), Tom Bowman (Pilot), Anthony Harrison (Lieutenant), Diane Aubrey Sapper (W.R.A.C. Secretary), Gerald Paris (Sapper), The Children: John Kelly, Carlo Cura, Lesley Scoble, Mark Mileham, Roger Malik, Peter Preidel, Theresa Scoble, Elizabeth Munden, Howard Knight, Peter Taylor. Village Children: Brian Smith, Janice Howley, Paul Norman, Robert Marks, John Bush, Billy Lawrence. Bruno (The Dog)

## CHILDREN OF THE DAMNED

### Credits

1963, Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, black and white. Director: Anton M. Leader. Producer: Lawrence P. Bachman. Associate Producer: Ben Arheid. Screenplay: John Briley. Photography: Davis Boulton. Art Director: Elliot Scott. Editor: Ernest Walter. Production Manager: Albert Beckett. Special Effects: Tom Howard. Assistant Director: Ted Sturgis. Music: Ron Goodwin. Casting Director: Irene Howard. Continuity: Betty Harley. Running time: 90 minutes.

### Cast

Ian Hendry (Tom Lewellin), Alan Badel (David Neville), Barbara Ferris (Susan Eliot), Alfred Burke (Colin Webster), Sheila Allen (Diana Loran), Patrick White (Mr. Davidson), Tom Bowman (General Miller), Martin Miller (Professor Gruber), Andre Mikhelson (Russian Official), Bessie Love (Mrs. Robbin), Harold Goldblatt (Ambassador Harib), Ralph Michael (Minister of Defense), The Children: Clive Powell (Paul), Frank Summerscale (Mark), Mahdu Mathen (Rashid), Gerald Delsol (Ago), Roberta Rex (Nina), Lee Yoke-Moon (Mi-Ling)

nant of them becomes involved with a woman, the other, played with malicious authority by Badel, throws himself actively into destroying the children" (*Science Fiction in the Cinema*, A. S. Barnes, 1970). This interpretation, shared by several other critics, trivializes the geneticist's motives and therefore misses the point of the film, as David's decision leads to disaster.

Few films of this era show homosexual relationships in a straightforward or realistic way. Tom and David may





Gordon Zellaby (George Sanders) strives desperately to focus his thoughts on a brick wall, the better to hide from the mind-reading talents of the alien Children the fact that he's packing a bomb. From the explosive climax of 1960's **VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED**.

or may not be a gay couple. (It's impossible to ask the actors what they had in mind, since Badel died in 1982 and Hendry in 1985.) They do seem comfortably rooted in the home they share, as an "old married couple"; however, they may simply be pals who room together because they're divorced or widowed or just prefer being bachelors. When Susan Eliot calls them at 4:30AM, Tom and David emerge from separate bedrooms to answer the phone. David openly leers at every woman he meets, which would be improbable behavior for a gay man, even in an old movie. When Tom tries to stop David from implementing his plan to have the Children killed, the two men fight. (The characters' names, Lewellin and Neville, are nearly anagrams, suggesting that they represent two sides of the issues they confront, as crudely demonstrated by the fight.) Finally, if Tom and David are gay, why would either of them fall for a woman?

Still, there's no evidence that Tom falls in love with Susan. He never says that he loves her. He never kisses her. The most he ever does is put his arm around her shoulders in the final scene, when the church, with the Children inside, goes up in a fireball. (Anyone witnessing this horrible event might want the comfort of physical contact.) There's nothing romantic or sexual about the scene, and there's no suggestion that Tom and Susan (or Tom and David, for that matter) might live happily ever after.

In any case, whatever personal relationships may or may not exist between David and Tom and Susan have nothing to do with David deciding that the children should die. Sex isn't the focus of **CHILDREN OF THE DAMNED**. David has strong, plausible motives, clearly spelled out in the film. He's afraid the Children will destroy humankind.

\*\*\*

One day they will have to fight us for our lives;  
they know that, and out of nervousness they made  
the mistake of thinking that the time had come.

—*The Midwich Cuckoos*

**VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED** and **CHILDREN OF THE DAMNED** probably wouldn't be made the same way today. They're relics of a bygone era. The Cold War is over. Now, as then, the idea of babies sired by aliens is the stuff of tabloid journalism, but, in today's world, where sperm donors, test tube fertilization, and surrogate motherhood are no longer science fiction, we're more likely

to worry about truth in advertising (did the sperm really come from a quality donor, or did the unattractive, unhealthy doctor use his own?), custody, child support, and the legal rights of surrogate versus adoptive parents. To the extent that we're even concerned about whether the infants born of this new technology are really human, the issue comes down to money more than philosophy: Are the kids genetically inferior, and if so, whom can we sue? None of these problems come up in **VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED** or **CHILDREN OF THE DAMNED**.

Cuckoldry is no joke even now, of course, but out-of-wedlock births have become so commonplace that younger viewers may think the shocked reaction to the pregnancies in **VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED** seems ridiculous. However, it's a reflection of real life in those days, when unwed mothers bore their "little mistakes" in secret disgrace. They and their bastard children faced open taunting and hostility. "Bastard" was a serious fighting word in 1960.

Today a film wouldn't dare portray women as docile receptacles of alien seed. The women would probably be angrier than the cuckolded men. Even in the early 1960s, in real life, some of the unwanted pregnancies in **VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED** and **CHILDREN OF THE DAMNED** might have been terminated. Wyndham's novel includes a pathetic but funny description of a woman madly pedaling her bicycle around town. Wyndham doesn't explain; he expects the reader to guess that the woman is trying to induce a miscarriage with violent exercise. The films ignore the possibility of abortion. In 1960, in England as in the United States, abortion was illegal. Mentioning it in a motion picture, even obliquely, was not permissible.

The ruined church in **CHILDREN** and the boarding school in **VILLAGE** resemble the inadequate sanctuaries of that era: orphanages, the majority of them church-affiliated. Both films invite the viewer to feel sympathy for the Children, despite their menace, because society mistreats them. In this the novel and the films anticipate the next decade, when society developed the more tolerant attitudes toward illegitimacy and nonconformity that prevail today.

Finally, there's no way that the Children's surviving victims would keep the story secret today. They'd fight over where to sell it, to the supermarket tabloids or Oprah or Geraldo.





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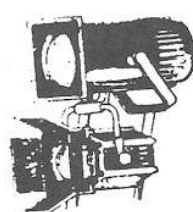
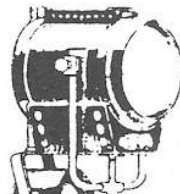
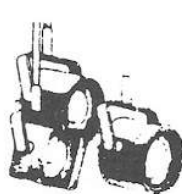
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Cat Girls, Gorgons . . . and Shakespeare

# *Barbara Shelley*

interviewed by Bruce G. Hallenbeck



One of the most important actresses to grace the screen during the era of British Gothic cinema, Barbara Shelley first came to the fore as the star of *CAT GIRL*, a 1957 shocker that was released in the U.S. by American International Pictures. Most of her later (and best) film work was for Hammer, including *CAMP ON BLOOD ISLAND* (1958), *SHADOW OF THE CAT* (1961), *THE GORGON* (1964), *SECRET OF BLOOD ISLAND* (1965), *DRACULA—PRINCE OF DARKNESS* (1966), *RASPUTIN—THE MAD MONK* (1966), and *QUATERMASS AND THE PIT* (1968). Her most memorable non-Hammer thriller was undoubtedly the sci-fi classic *VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED* (1960). Eros Films' *BLOOD OF THE VAMPIRE* (1958) provided some colorful Gothic chills as well.

Shelley's most recent film is *GHOST STORY* (a.k.a. *MADHOUSE MANSION*), a 1974 British film not to be confused with 1981's film of that title. Since then, the tall, throaty-voiced, classically-trained actress has been concentrating on stage and television work.

Speaking from her home in London, Barbara Shelley recently reminisced about her work in Gothic horror and mystery films and updated us on her non-horror career.

*Scarlet Street:* Your actual name is Barbara Kowin, isn't it?

**Barbara Shelley:** Kowin, yes.

**SS:** Didn't your stage name have something to do with the poet Shelley?

**BS:** Yes. One of Italy's biggest comedic actors, Walter Chiari, came up with that. I was in a revue with him. My stage name was Barbara Martin. I didn't speak Italian in those days; I only spoke a kind of schoolgirl French. There was a Barbara Shelley listed in the program, and I wanted to know who Barbara Shelley was. And Walter said, "It's you!" I said, "No, it isn't; it's Barbara Martin." He said, "No, it's not; that reminds me of dog powders!" This was in bad French, remember. Well, he spoke in good French, but I didn't. He said, "Shelley's my favorite poet and Shelley lived in Rome, so you're Barbara Shelley!" I was upset at first, but then I thought it flowed quite nicely. So that's how I got the name Shelley.

**SS:** Were you an actress or a model first?

**BS:** Well, I studied to be an actress first. I was incredibly shy when I was on the stage; in fact, I was shy in general. When I went to town to buy sugar, I'd blush. The woman who had trained me wanted to send me up north to a repertory company, but I was terrified of going. It was almost a phobia; I didn't want to leave home. She suggested that, as my deportment was good, why shouldn't I become a model till some of the rough edges rubbed off? So I became a model, which in a way was the worst thing to do. The attitude was, models can't act. I found it very difficult to get into acting after being a model. I suppose I was good. I modeled for *Vogue* and things like that. But I was never a famous model; I was just a good clothes horse.

**SS:** We gather that you weren't crazy about it.

**BS:** Well, in those days it wasn't as choreographed as it is now. There

were only four or five moves you could do, turning and walking. I neither liked nor disliked it; it was a means to an end, just a way of getting used to traveling. I met new people, learned a bit about *haute couture*, learned a bit about dressmaking.

**SS:** Your first films were made in Italy.

**What was your first feature?**

**BS:** *BALLATA TRAGICA*; "The Tragic Dance".

**SS:** What do you remember about it?

**BS:** Well, as with a lot of Italian films, it was rather low-budget and just for internal distribution. It had to do with spying and smuggling in the south of Italy.

**SS:** You must have been quite young.

**BS:** Ah, well, I never talk of age—so if you want to talk age, don't talk to me. (Laughs)

**SS:** How many motion pictures did you make in Italy?

**BS:** Between six and 12, I expect. In those days, when they did films in Italy, it was all dubbed afterwards. There was no direct sound. I thought it wasn't fair; I thought it would be better if I learned my part in Italian, so that people could understand what I was saying. There was a woman, an assistant director on some of those films, who helped me learn to speak Italian. Of course, if the other actor was speaking German, I'd just wait for my cue and then I'd come out with the line. I understood the content, but I didn't know exactly what I was saying. The director still didn't know what language I was speaking. He couldn't understand me, and I was the only one speaking Italian!

**SS:** How did you break into British films?

**BS:** Well, I met the head of the Rank Organization in Florence, where I'd gone to visit friends. She said she'd be interested in talking to me when I came back to England. I was going back anyway—not to stay, but on a sort of extended holiday. I was well-known in Italy, but not at all in Eng-

land. When I came back, there was quite a lot of interest, and three different types of contracts were offered to me. Somebody wanted to manage me. I suppose I made the mistake of choosing the wrong contract. It was between Sidney Box and British Lion. I had a manager and an agent, but really I had no support anywhere. When anything went wrong on a film set, they'd all pass the buck. It was a very, very confusing time. Also, there's a lovely man called Alfred Shaugnessy, who was the first director I worked with in England. He said about me in his book, *Burning the Candle*, that he literally pleaded with Sidney Box that I should not be given the second-feature films that I was being given. I really was given any old work, even with being under contract with two different companies and having a manager and an agent.

**SS:** Alfred Shaugnessy directed your first British film—and your first horror film—*CAT GIRL*.

**BS:** Yes, that's the one I was talking about. He was the director.

**SS:** As it was your first film of that type, did you have any problems with the script or direction?

**BS:** I didn't have any problems with that. I had made very good friends with the leopard, who was called Chiefie. I love animals; I love to work with animals, especially monkeys. They're my big passion. As a model, I was taken to a zoo to do some photographs for TWA. I met the monkeys and cheetahs and the young lions and all sorts of things. I lived near the zoo and used to go back every Saturday. I used to go, as it were, backstage, where the head keeper had the monkeys out playing—orangutans and things like that—so I'm mad about animals, and my main memory of *CAT GIRL* is Chiefie. The trainer, first of all, taught me how to put my hand in the cage—always around the bars. He realized





**LEFT:** Barbara Shelley's first horror foray was as the titular tabby in 1957's *CAT GIRL*. **RIGHT:** Poster art for the classic *VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED* (1960). **PAGE 72:** Shelley's Martian-induced psychic powers all but brought London to its knees in 1968's *FIVE MILLION YEARS TO EARTH* (*QUATERMASS AND THE PIT*).

that I wasn't frightened and said, "Well, let's see if we can do some work with you and the leopard together." I'd have my hand round the bars, and he'd put my hand in and the leopard would lick my hand. I'd take him on the lead around the grounds of the film studio. In film archives somewhere, there's an old paper—an old *Sunday Graphic* written by

Dick Bentley, with a picture of me leading the leopard on a chain. He wrote that this was too dangerous, because the press had said that they didn't believe that I should work with a leopard. They all came down one evening, and I was standing with the leopard when the press came in. There was a man up in the gantry who shouldn't have been there, but

he was doing some work. The leopard saw him and went berserk. Frank, the trainer, was there with a gun. He was a North Country man, and he said very quietly, "Don't move, luv." I said, "Who's moving?" (Laughs) The leopard jumped past me and back-pedaled across the studio and found himself up against a wall, which he didn't like. We looked up

**LEFT:** Poster art for Hammer's *THE GORGON* (1964). **RIGHT:** Barbara Shelley's first film for Hammer was 1958's *CAMP ON BLOOD ISLAND*, in which she costarred with Andre Morrell.





and all the press had gone! You know those double doors they have in studios, like an air lock? They were leaning against them—on the outside!

SS: *We can't blame them.*

BS: I knew Chiefie so well by then that Frank used to bring him to my dressing room. The leopard used to sit on my couch. As long as I put a sheet over the mirror, Chiefie was fine. He used to purr like a bloody great cat. So there was this article in the *Graphic* because it scared the bejesus out of all the photographers!

SS: *Was your next film CAMP ON BLOOD ISLAND?*

BS: No, first I did quite a few for Sidney Box and British Lion. There was one called *SOLITARY CHILD* that was like a poor man's *REBECCA*. There were also quite a lot of second-feature films, and *THE STORY OF DAVID* with Jeff Chandler. *CAMP ON BLOOD ISLAND* was the first one that I did for Hammer. That was directed by Val Guest.

SS: *How was he as a director?*

BS: Val was a pleasant man to work with. He came on the set with some storyboards that he'd done, knowing exactly what he wanted. He'd done it all, and there didn't seem to be much divergence from that. I mean, it's a long while ago, but I seem to remember that it was a little bit rigid to work with Val. But he was a pleasant man, personally.

SS: *There wasn't room to improvise?*

BS: Well, I suppose that if you have a director coming in—and I understand that William Wyler was the same—and he knows exactly what he wants, that's fine. You find in television, where you have a chance to rehearse for two or three weeks, the actor has a little more input. I suppose because theater is my favorite thing, I find films a little restricting. I think that the most imaginative takes are, in my case, between one and four. After that, you go through a period when you reach a plateau and nothing more happens. I suppose, if it's an enormous-budget film—which I've never done, of course—with an endless number of takes, the artist gets time to make mistakes. But in films, the artist is supposed to do every take perfectly. It's the technicians who get the chance to make mistakes: "We have to go again because the camera wasn't right. We have to go again because one of the lights flickered." Even if it's your best take! When I

did television in America, I found them much more artist-oriented.

SS: *Really?*

BS: Much more. I loved working in the States. There was no hanging about. I'd go to my chair to have a cigarette, and before I even got it alight, there would be a "beep" from the camera—ready for the next take. In England, there's like a whole packet between takes, in both television and in film. In Hollywood, your feet never touch the ground. I'd much rather film in the States.

SS: *You were in one of our favorite TV shows, THE MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E.*

improvised on camera." He said, "Come see the dailies." They used to play awful tricks. In the middle of a shot, Martin's moustache came off. No one had told me that he was wearing a moustache as a disguise within a disguise. Oh, I loved doing that show and working with Joe Sargent and Martin Balsam. One of the best shows I've ever done.

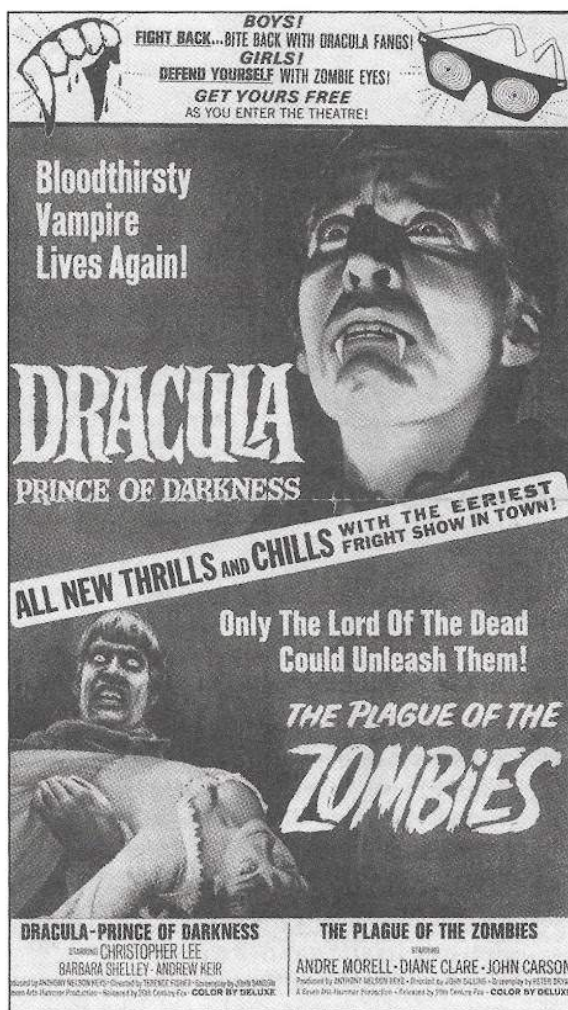
SS: *Back to your film career. What do you remember about BLOOD OF THE VAMPIRE besides Donald Wolfitt's bushy eyebrows?*

BS: Donald Wolfitt was a lovely man. He'd only just become "Sir" when I worked with him; he'd just got his knighthood. He was very charming to me. Being a theater fanatic, I'd seen Donald Wolfitt when I was a small child. My father took me when I was six to the Colosseum to see Donald Wolfitt in *THE MERCHANT OF VENICE*. That was my introduction to the theater; that's when I fell in love with it. Anyway, to work with Donald after all those years—well, I used to sit and he'd tell theater stories. I told him I'd seen everything he'd done—when I got into my teens I used to go—and I still say, of all the Lears I've seen, Donald Wolfitt was the best. He was never run-of-the-mill; he was always a larger-than-life actor. And Donald was lovely to work with. A lot of people think that these actor/managers are lazy. Well, there was a scene in which he had to carry me across a laboratory. They said to him, "Well, you just take her off the wall"—I was chained to the wall—"take two steps, and we'll pick it up with her on the table." He insisted on carrying me the length of the laboratory! It was four takes! He lifted me, crinoline and dead weight and all, because I was supposed to be drugged, and he carried me the length of the laboratory four times—though I must say that, the third time, he

did throw me down a little more wildly! He sort of dropped me on the table! (Laughs) But that sort of thing—he didn't have to do it. He thought it was par for the course and par for the work. I thoroughly enjoyed working with Sir Donald. It was a tremendous experience.

SS: *Acting in horror films, did you find it a challenge to make the frankly unbelievable believable?*

BS: I know this sounds weird, but it's no more of a challenge than any act-



BS: Yes, with Martin Balsam. That's why I did it. I had one foot on the plane to come back to England, and George Morris, my agent—God rest him, he's dead—said, "Go over and see them." I said, "Who's playing the other part?" They said Martin Balsam, and I said, "I'll stay!" It was lovely, because Joe Sargent was directing and that was the first time ever that I'd done improvising on camera. Joe was wonderful. I said, "I'm worried about this. I've never





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**DRACULA—PRINCE OF DARKNESS** (1966) gave Barbara Shelley one of her best roles (and horroddom one of its most compelling characters) in Helen, a strait-laced puritan who becomes a lust-filled vampire—and suffers the consequences.

ing part. How can I explain it? It's going to sound like psychobabble, but I don't mean it to. If you're up there doing any part—Lady M or Cleopatra or whomever you're playing—you're putting yourself in the part; in the case of Cleopatra, in that of an Egyptian queen of years ago. Acting is largely drawing on past experience, drawing on your storehouse of emotions. There isn't an awful lot of difference playing someone in a horror film. It's only a case of using your imagination. You're taking yourself outside yourself into another character, and then making that character your own. Making that character as near as possible to yourself. It might, to the general public, seem something very different.

**SS:** In other words, when you played the vampire in . . .

**BS:** I only played one vampire, but nobody believes that! It's so real to you when you're playing it. In

**DRACULA—PRINCE OF DARKNESS**, when I played the vampire, I had in my mind the feeling of a Greek Fury. I talked to darling Terence Fisher, who reckoned that the vampire was basically evil. I thought, "Okay, something that's ranting and raving and carrying on within itself", and I thought of a Fury from reading the old Greek tragedies and dramas. I always like to have what I call a peg to hang my hat on. Once I've found it, it's mine—but I've got to find that peg, first of all.

**SS:** Although it's science fiction, *VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED* incorporates genuine domestic concerns: namely, that of a pregnant woman that her child may not be normal and the fear that her love is not returned.

**BS:** That film has become a classic. It's shown—I've never been invited—in places like Brazil; I know that Wolf Rilla goes off, all expenses paid, as the director. Quite a few

years ago, I saw him when he'd just got back from Brazil or someplace. I was piqued; I thought, "Why don't they invite me?" But there was no scene in the film with a chance for the women to dramatize their situation—not only me, but the other women, most of whom were in disgrace for having children without being married or when their husband was at sea. They showed the women being rejected by society because they were having these children. Not in the case of my character, because she was married and trying to have a child. Unfortunately, in my case, there was no way to show the mother fighting for her child. Had there been that other strain through it, of mother and child, it would have increased the film's effectiveness many times. It would have brought another dimension. The film showed the scientific side with George Sanders' character, but I don't think



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*"George Sanders came out of his dressing room and said, 'Who plays chess?' And this little voice piped up: 'I do, sir!' And George—I caught him winking, but he was too much a gentleman to put the child down—he put his arm around Martin and said, 'Come along then, my boy!' And, of course, Martin beat him!"*

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it showed the human side enough. This is a woman's point of view, and at the time the film was a great success—so why quibble? But I've always thought that there wasn't enough of that, because I would have liked to have shown more. I would have liked to have shown the joy of discovering that you're pregnant.

SS: *And the fear?*

BS: There was just one very, very short scene, as I remember, when she says to her husband, "How do I know what I'm going to give birth to?" But there wasn't, from my character's point of view, enough to get your teeth into, to show those emotions. You had to show them as a subtext throughout the scene.

SS: *Were you familiar with the book The Midwich Cuckoos?*

BS: Yes, although I read it afterward and not before; otherwise you get disappointed, if you've read a book and then you see the film script.

SS: *Martin Stephens, the boy who played your son, was remarkable.*

BS: Oh, he was a darling child. He was sweet. His mother, an incredibly sensible lady, said, "I'm going to allow him to be an actor because that's what he wants to do. But he's very lucky, because a lot of boys can do what he does." George Sanders came out of his dressing room one day and said, "Who plays chess?" And this little voice piped up: "I do, sir!" George said, "You do, Martin?" And he said yes. And George—I caught him winking at me, but he was far too much a gentleman to put the child down—he put his arm around Martin and said, "Well, come along then, my boy!" And, of course, Martin beat him! George used to walk around and say, "He beat me!" And I'd say, "George, you should know better than to play with children." (Laughs) Years later, I was on tour with a play up in the north of England when the stage doorman came to me and said, "There's an elderly couple downstairs who say they are Martin Stephens' grandparents." They were absolutely charming and invited me to tea at their bungalow—and that bungalow was

the first thing that Martin had designed as an architect. He gave up acting and became an architect. It was a very beautiful, innovatively designed bungalow, because it was done around a kind of courtyard. Very unlike a north-of-England type thing. So that's what happened to Martin. He was a charming child. He did a lot of work after *VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED*, but then he decided that he didn't want to take it up. His grandmother said that he didn't grow very tall. She said he suddenly decided that, no, he didn't want to do that; he wanted to be an architect.

SS: *SHADOW OF THE CAT is another entertaining film.*

BS: Ah, that's darling George. That's where I met George Baxt.

SS: *He wrote the screenplay. The film was less horror and more suspense. Is that the approach you prefer?*

BS: I prefer suggestion. That goes for sex scenes, that goes for horror scenes . . . I mean, there's much more horror in the sound of Peter Cushing doing an autopsy on somebody's head than in the sight of it. What he's actually doing is cutting a cabbage, but the sound that comes over the screen is really ghastly! The sound is really excruciating. It makes you hold your stomach. *SHADOW OF THE CAT*, I thought, was a lovely script. As I say, I met George that way. He wasn't here at the time—he was out of the country—and I used to sublease his flat. It's a good film, but I thought that the original script and the original idea were about 500% more than they actually got on the screen. George's original script was 500% more spooky.

SS: *Not to put you on the spot, but would that be director John Gilling's fault, or the distributors, or the producers?*

BS: In a way, that does put me on the spot. I think it happens when there's a lack of imagination. I suppose, in a way, that's the director's fault. George's original idea of the cat and the consciences of the people who have done these crimes—the cat was kind of their conscience; it brought their crimes up to face them—I don't think that came over at

all. In the script, there was much more of a feeling that you weren't quite sure if it was a normal cat or if there was the spirit of the dead woman in the cat. Nothing of that was brought out. It was a nicely shot and competently done thriller. It could have been a lot more.

SS: *That was your second film with Andre Morell, wasn't it?*

BS: Andre was a nice man. He was in *CAMP ON BLOOD ISLAND*. He was a charming man, a great gentleman—he and George Sanders, both.

SS: *On to your next Hammer film, THE GORGON. Why did you not play the gorgon when your character, Karla, transformed into the creature?*

BS: They were talking about using mechanical snakes, and I said to lovely Tony Nelson-Keys, "I've had boa constrictors around my neck. I'm not at all frightened of snakes. If you use real snakes, you'll have the horror film of all time. A lot of people have phobias about snakes. Get a snake charmer or something, make a headdress, I can wear no makeup. Have the snakes whipping round this headdress, and stick it on my head. You only literally need a few seconds of film." "No," says Tony, "we can't do that, because we've only X number of days to shoot the film and you're going to need makeup . . ." I said, "No, I won't need makeup, just a green base." But they said they hadn't time for makeup changes. Well, I don't think that was true. I think they wanted to do special effects because Hammer films were famous for special effects. That was the problem; I don't think that they could accept the risk of making a horror film that had no special effects. Anyway, the next film I made for them was *SECRET OF BLOOD ISLAND* and we were on location at Blackwater Park; we had little caravans. Tony Nelson-Keys had seen the finished cut of *THE GORGON*. He came into my caravan, stood in the doorway, and said, "You were right." Then he walked out again! (Laughs) Of course, I was right! If you can imagine real snakes around someone's head . . . and, you see, I



wasn't frightened. If you let me see a spider, even a small one, I'm not happy. But snakes, no problem!

**SS:** That was your first film with Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee. Everybody likes Cushing, but Lee is considered aloof. Is that a fair assessment?

**BS:** No, not with me. No, he's not aloof. Christopher is a man of great dignity, I think that's what it is. He speaks something like seven languages, including Russian. He has a golf handicap that is so good that nobody believes it. He's a man who keeps to himself to a certain extent. But he and Peter Cushing... they're incredible friends. Both of them love cartoons. They were asked to leave one of the cartoon theaters in London once because they were laughing so much. Especially at Sylvester the Cat; Peter used to do this wonderful imitation of Sylvester. Peter and I used to do Gilbert and Sullivan patter songs to see who could do them the fastest. I played a lot of Gilbert and Sullivan parts when I was at school, and Chris had sung roles with the Swedish Opera. He's got a wonderful bass voice. So Chris and I used to sing operatic arias in the morning. I'm baritone and he's bass! (Laughs) In *DRACULA—PRINCE OF DARKNESS*, when he came down the steps and hid me in his cloak, I was goosing him! He said, "You terrible woman!" I'm a great admirer of Chris. When he played Rasputin, I thought he was brilliant. If it hadn't been a Hammer film, he would have had in-

credible reviews for that. I worked with Chris a lot back then, and he was a friend, a mate. We used to drive back to London together. We talked a lot; we used to tell each other personal things. He's a very vulnerable man, quite a nervous man in a certain way. He's a great character, Christopher Lee. One of my favorite actors to work with.

**SS:** And one of our favorites to watch.

**BS:** Chris is a friend. Really, it's very difficult to work with a great mate and be impressed. Yet he could almost hypnotize me in *RASPUTIN*. This tremendous inner strength came through. He's made a great career for himself, but he's underrated. There's another tremendous facet of Christopher Lee's acting ability that was never brought out because of the direction his career took.

**SS:** And Peter Cushing...?

**BS:** Peter Cushing is a great classical actor. He's done all the stage work. That's where he met his beloved wife, acting in classical theater. Another great actor, in a kind of lighter way. I'm probably wrong, because I never saw Peter on stage, but I always think of him as the light classical actor and Chris as probably the master of the heavier roles.

**SS:** Let's talk about the character you played in *DRACULA—PRINCE OF DARKNESS*. Although she's prudish and annoying to her fellow travelers, it's seldom pointed out that Helen is also right. She's afraid, and with good reason. Were the different aspects of

the character in the script, or did you bring them to the part?

**BS:** Well, there isn't any great difficulty in what the director wants or what you see in the character. Terry might say, "Make her a bit more tight-lipped," but there wasn't really any difficulty. The lines are there; then I suppose it's how you deliver them and how the director wants you to deliver them. None of them are incredibly well-written parts. The Hammer films were not written as parts; in a funny way, they were written as films, so any characterization is put in by the actors. Let's put it that way. The films were written as brilliant horror stories. They were almost set pieces; you started off here, then this happened, this person got killed, the hero and heroine usually got away. But they were written in a very clever, "building-to-climaxes" sort of way. Actual characterizations, though... all you would get in a Hammer film script would be, "Helen appears in the doorway. She's severely dressed, with a sharp, spinsterish face." And that's all you got until you got the lines. It was the same with the various lovely little characterizations from the innkeepers and people like that. That was all brought to the script by the actors. Of course, casting was a very important part of those films. There was lovely Andrew Keir as the monk in *DRACULA—PRINCE OF DARKNESS*. That part was entirely Andrew. Anybody could walk







**CAT GIRL** (1957) resulted in—what else?—a cat fight between Barbara Shelley and Kay Callard. The British film was an uncredited semi-remake of Val Lewton's **CAT PEOPLE** (1942).



**SHADOW OF THE CAT** (1961), which introduced Barbara Shelley to screenwriter George Baxt, costarred Andre Morell and Freda Jackson.



**RASPUTIN—THE MAD MONK** (1966) did in Barbara Shelley, much to Dinsdale Landon's consternation.

around and chant, but the rest was all Andrew.

**SS:** When Helen becomes a vampire, she turns into an extremely sensuous being. Terence Fisher said something to the effect that, when you become a vampire, you're no longer merely heterosexual.

**BS:** That's exactly what he said. He said, "Just remember, a vampire will have anything that's not nailed down." That's how I tried to play it.

**SS:** Fisher was a very underrated talent.

**BS:** Oh, yes. Smashing man. You know, when I was about 11, I was almost as tall as I am now, and I used to be able to get into any film. I used to go to a lot of horror films. They weren't my favorites, but I got used to *Frankenstein* meets this, that, and the other. There was one scene in *DRA-CULA—PRINCE OF DARK-NESS* where poor old Helen finds her husband upended over the grave. I went onto the set when the scene was being set up, and they had a stand-in for Charles Tingwell hanging over the grave with the blood pouring out of him. I said to Terry, "That's it! You've done it! I don't think I want to watch that!" He roared with laughter. I said, "No, I'm off, I don't want to watch that. I don't like the look of that at all." Usually I see all the mechanics of a scene going on. But I didn't want to watch that; that was too real. I came off the set.

**SS:** You must have made Fisher's day.

**BS:** Oh, absolutely! He was such a darling, that man. He used to laugh like a child. He'd have his hand up to his mouth, and when he laughed, he used to raise his shoulders almost past his ears. He used to love making those films.

**SS:** One of Hammer's best was your last for them, *QUATERMASS AND THE PIT*.

**BS:** We used to call it *QUATERPISS ON THE MAT*! That was with lovely Andrew Keir again.

**SS:** Any memories of the film?

**BS:** That was pleasant, working with one of my favorite directors, Roy Baker. Roy is another very underestimated director, although he's done some important work. I did a television film for him with Rita Tushingham. He was a very good director; excellent. Again, working with Andrew was like working with an old friend. It's always nice working with people another time round.

**SS:** That was your swan song for Hammer.

**BS:** I remember saying to my agent, "I would rather not do any more horror films for the moment," because I wasn't getting any other films offered me. I also wanted to work for the Royal Shakespeare Company. In a funny way, horror films were looked down on—not as pieces of entertainment, but the artists working in them weren't of the same standard as, let's say, someone who worked for the National. Well, funnily enough, as soon as I did that, there was a tremendous slump in the industry, and who should start making horror films but John Gielgud and Janet Suzman? When I said I didn't want to do any more horror films, I said, "I'll do radio; I'll do anything." I did do radio, and the first thing they offered me was *DAY OF THE TRIFFIDS*! Which I did.

**SS:** You made at least one other supernatural movie: *GHOST STORY*, in 1974.

**BS:** Well, that I did for a specific reason, because one of the producers and his wife were great personal friends of mine—Ronnie Lacey and his wife, Joanna. I'm godmother to their son Matthew.

**SS:** Ronald Lacey, the actor?

**BS:** Yes. God rest him, he died. He was one of the producers, and he phoned and asked if I'd do it. I said, "Ron, I don't want to do any more horror films, even for you, darling." He said, "Well, wouldn't you

*Continued on page 110*



# Our Man on Baker Street

## *Farewell to the Master*

The gas lamps in Baker Street are burning very low tonight. There is no lithe, sharp-nosed figure silhouetted against the blinds of 221B and no errant cab clatters to a halt, its wheels squeaking against the kerb, as some flustered and perturbed client leaps out to visit Mr. Sherlock Holmes. Inside that hallowed chamber, up the 17 steps, no noxious tobacco fumes twist and curl by the cheery hearth. Indeed the fire is out and there are no strains of violin music to sweeten the air. Suddenly, as if by magic (and it is magic of a sort), the wall by the doorway shakes, slowly at first and then with a violent motion as if caught in an earthquake. As it falls inwards upon the room, the wall reveals itself to be cardboard thin: a facade. On the roughened back, an inelegant hand has painted the legend "Holmes Set 221B. Int 3A".

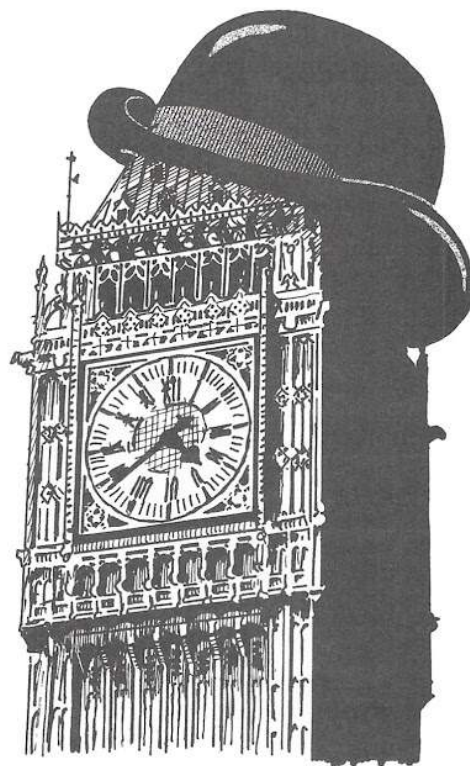
The Granada technicians are demolishing the Baker Street rooms. The heart, the core of Holmes' world is being dismantled and will probably be recycled. His fireplace could turn up in some period soap drama; his bedroom wall may be repainted and used as part of a fast-food cafe. Who can tell? Of course, this demolition job has been done before; after all, it is the end of the current series. But this time it is more significant than

that, more poignant. It's not just the end of the series: It is the end of Granada's Holmes altogether. The last one. His Last Bow. In this room, now a collection of coloured flats, Jeremy Brett has begun or concluded over 40 mysteries in this sparkling series of films. Now he and Edward Hardwicke, having hung up their costumes, removed their makeup, are walking into the Sherlockian sunset leaving behind a void in all mystery lovers' hearts.

The making of THE MEMOIRS OF SHERLOCK HOLMES, as this swan song is titled, has been fraught with problems. In the first place, it almost never happened. Producer June Wyndham Davies was offered a time slot for three programmes, no more. Now we all know, three episodes do not a series make, so she wisely and very bravely grasped the nettle and decided to make six, hoping (and praying) that the other three would be picked up as well. Prayers were answered, but for a time it was touch and go.

Jeremy Brett has encountered a series of health problems during the gruelling eight-month shoot. He has suffered from asthma and a recurring heart problem, exacerbated by being prescribed the wrong drugs—drugs he has been taking since his breakdown in 1987. His growing size as Holmes has been a great concern and this, he says, was the result of lithium poisoning due to these drugs. He has moved from just under 13 stone in the early films to over 16 in THE THREE GABLES in the new series. In the last film of all, THE CARDBOARD BOX, he is back to 13 stone, but because of his illness he looks quite drawn. However, he is convinced that THE MEMOIRS contains some of the best Holmes films. In Britain we shall be able to judge for ourselves very soon as they are scheduled for transmission in early spring. In the Summer Issue, I shall be reviewing the series and writing about my conversation with Jeremy Brett, Edward Hardwicke, and others at the end of this magical era.

Perhaps now is the time to stop: The best stories have been filmed, both Brett and Hardwicke are approaching 60, and it is becoming very hard to maintain the freshness. Maybe it is time for a breather, time



to reassess, time to let the dust settle until some other actor comes along to pick up the baton and run with Holmes. However THE MEMOIRS may turn out, and no matter how disappointing we found THE LAST VAMPIRE and THE ELIGIBLE BACHELOR—replete with their irrelevant and risible padding—overall this series has been remarkable, bringing light and lustre, colour and depth to the Baker Street tales of Arthur Conan Doyle's marvellous creation. It has provided us with hours of pleasure and stimulation. For this we must thank a splendid set of people: Michael Cox, the man who conceived the idea in the first place and persuaded Granada to do it in such a splendid fashion; June Wyndham Davies for her courage and determination in carrying on the demanding work; to the writers, especially John Hawkesworth, Jeremy Paul, and Trevor Bowen, who have taken the potions of Conan Doyle and added their own magic ingredients; to Colin Jeavons as Lestrade, Rosalie Williams as Mrs. Hudson, and Charles Gray as Mycroft Holmes, glorious icing on the Sherlockian cake; to David Burke for his charming and very likeable Watson; to Edward Hardwicke for his humane and authentic Watson—but most of all to Jeremy Brett for breathing fire, life, and substance into the ultimate hero. Thank you.

—David Stuart Davies

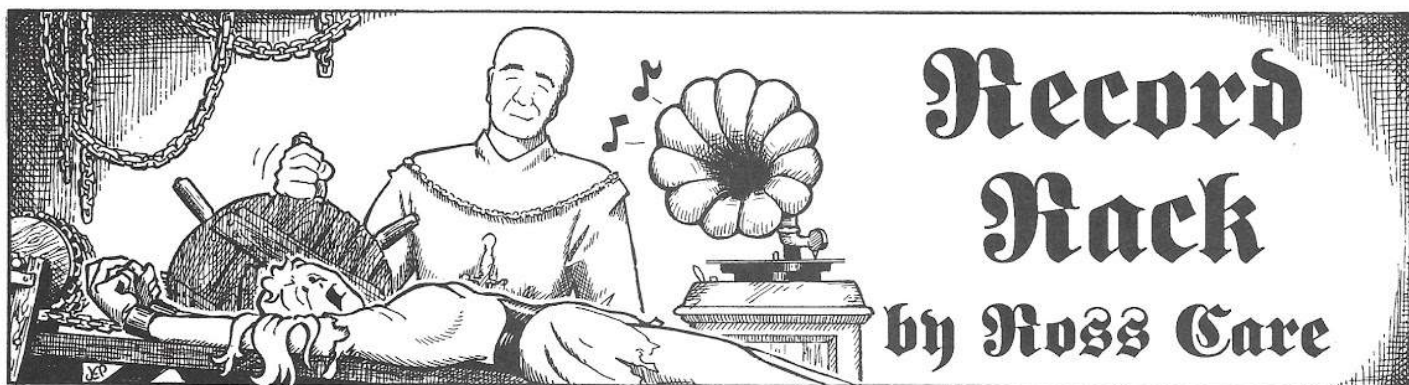
SCARLET STREET 83

Photo: David Stuart Davies



A weary Jeremy Brett on the set of THE THREE GABLES.





# Record Rack

by Ross Care

**BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN, THE INVISIBLE RAY:** Re-recorded soundtracks. Franz Waxman. The Westminster Philharmonic Orchestra, Kenneth Alwyn, conductor. Time: 46:31. Silva Screen Records Ltd. CD Filmed 135.

**THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL:** Original soundtrack. Bernard Herrmann. Time: 36:02. 20th Century Fox Film Scores. CD 07822-11010-2

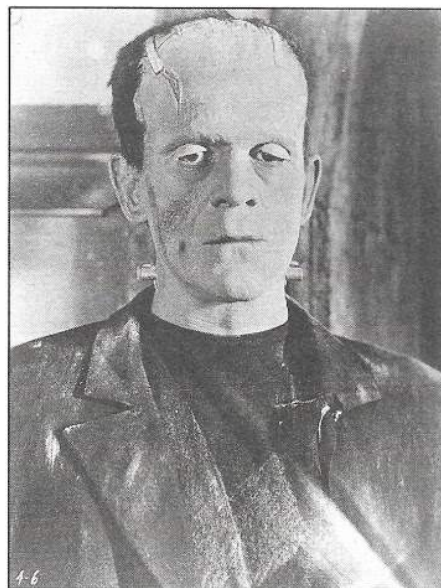
**LAURA; JANE EYRE:** Original soundtracks. David Raksin, Bernard Herrmann. Time: 65:22. 20th Century Fox Film Score. CD 07822-11006-2.

Film composers scoring for a genre—be it horror, mystery, or sci-fi—often welcomed the opportunity to create in more advanced and experimental modes than would be possible in less stylized films. Franz Waxman's score for *BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN* (1935)—“Warning! The Monster demands a Mate!”—is a pioneering example of a film score outré enough to vividly evoke its unconventional subject matter, yet direct, appealing, and accessible enough to satisfy both Hollywood and the mass audience forever wooed by Tinseltown.

Waxman, born in Germany in 1906, was a classically-trained musician who also played piano in the Weintraub Synkopaters, a jazz band that appeared in Josef von Sternberg's *THE BLUE ANGEL* (1931). His musical duality was shared by many of Waxman's contemporaries—among them Max Steiner, Alfred Newman, Victor Young—whose work in both concert and popular (often musical theater) milieus surely contributed to the enduring popular appeal of the film themes they eventually created. After experiencing Nazi harassment and violence in pre-World War II Berlin, Waxman emigrated to Paris, where he co-composed the score for Fritz Lang's *LILIOM* (1934), then continued on to Hollywood where he obtained

work on the film of Jerome Kern's *MUSIC IN THE AIR* (1934). Waxman's ensuing meeting with British director James Whale at a Hollywood party led to *BRIDE*, a position at Universal, and a prolific Hollywood career that lasted well into the 1960s.

Though active throughout the late 1930s and 1940s, Waxman came into his own in the 1950s with such presti-



**BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN (1935)**

gious films as *SUNSET BOULEVARD* (1950), *A PLACE IN THE SUN* (1951), and *THE NUN'S STORY* (1959). No stranger to genre scoring, *BRIDE* foreshadowed *THE DEVIL DOLL* (1936), *REBECCA* (1940), and *SUSPICION* (1941), and the MGM *DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE* (1941); the versatile Waxman also turned out dynamite scores for such Westerns as *THE FURIES* (1950), and for exotic/epic romances such as *ELEPHANT WALK* (1954) and *TARAS BULBA* (1962). During the CinemaScope era, he set the stage for the later *STAR WARS* period with his rousing score for the lushly photographed *PRINCE VALIANT* (1954), and fashioned a

piece of Americana that ranks among his masterpieces: the richly lyrical score for 20th's high-toned version of Grace Metalious' steamy *PEYTON PLACE* (1957). The film inspired a theme that re-emerged as “The Wonderful Season Of Love” in PP's less elevated sequel, *RETURN TO PEYTON PLACE* (1961), and was used yet again for the TV series.

It's interesting to recall Waxman's work on *LILIOM*. Molnar's dramatic fantasy was the basis for Rodgers and Hammerstein's *CAROUSEL* (1945), and, as more than one writer has pointed out, Waxman's motif for the Monster's Bride seems to have been recycled as the first three notes of a certain famous tune in a certain other Pulitzer Prize-winning Rodgers and Hammerstein musical. Indeed, parts of this Rodgers tune are so similar to Waxman's theme that you may think the Bride is about to morph into Bloody Mary and burst into the final chorus of “Bali Hai”!

Coincidental or deliberate, who knows? Of course, Rodgers elaborated the brief motive into his own fully-developed melody, but any musical comedy fan will probably note the similarity. The “Bride” motif is a simple one: an octave leap immediately followed by a descending half step, this touch of chromaticism lending a corresponding touch of bizarre eroticism to the grotesque, yet oddly alluring female creature. As soundtrack scoring seldom allows for leisurely character development, the Monster's theme is also short and vivid: a five-note motive based on the interval of a minor third, but which actually uses only two pitches (F and A-flat) to create an instant evocation of strength and menace. (The “Monster” motif is heard almost immediately in the dissonant opening fanfare of the film's “Main Title”.) Waxman's development of his extremely concentrated material is one of the notable achievements of this score, which is cohesive, well-



structured, and extremely listenable throughout.

Compared to later fantasy scores (Jerry Goldsmith's harmonically complex *PLANET OF THE APES* from 1968, for instance), Waxman's basic material and tonalities are admittedly simple. He was, after all, writing for audiences of a much more musically naive period, which makes *BRIDE*'s sophistication all the more remarkable. Portions of the score remain linked to its period, especially its minor mode march/chase sequences ("Processional March", "Village Chase"), yet the music constantly melds between 19th and 20th century musical idioms in a fluid manner most appropriate to the futuristic Gothicism of the storyline it reinforces. In the fantasy sequences especially, Waxman's awareness of contemporary styles, from Wagner through Sibelius and the Impressionists, establishes a timeless yet sleekly modern aura of 'cinefantastique' that current Hollywood composers would be hard pressed to replicate. *BRIDE* is also, along with Steiner's *KING KONG* (1933), one of the first fully-developed original scores ever composed. Earlier Universal horror films, such as *DRACULA* (1931) and *THE MUMMY* (1932), were very sparsely scored, with both main titles borrowed from Tchaikovsky's *Prelude to Act II* of his "Swan Lake" ballet. *BRIDE*'s cues were often recycled in later Universal projects, including the *Flash Gordon* serials.

Silva Screen's digital re-recording of Waxman's seminal score is complete, except for a few minor cues. For a 1930s film, *BRIDE* is heavily scored, yet both film and music move

along with neither filler nor wasted time. A Mozartean "Prologue" introduces the "elegant three" (an effete Lord Byron and the Shelleys), who exchange arch banter and review the more bloodcurdling incidents from the original film. As Mary Shelley begins to relate her sequel, the score proceeds almost unbroken up to the appearance of Dr. Pretorius; this includes the "Monster Entrance" music, which supports a transitional sequence at the burnt mill (the Monster revives to kill both parents of the young girl he despatched in the first film), as well as a comic interlude (with a shrieking Una O'Connor) that softens the impact of these brutal scenes. The ensuing Pretorius sequences introduce his sardonic theme, the score's third major motif ("Pretorius' Entrance"), and include the fanciful cue for his tiny creations ("Bottle Sequence").

A medley of cues follows the scene in which Pretorius forces Frankenstein to aid in his plan to create a woman (a restored cue: "Female Monster Music"), after which the Monster is seen wandering in the woods to an idyllic "Pastorals", soon diverted by the rousing "Village Chase". After the Monster is captured ("Crucifixion") and briefly jailed ("Monster Breaks Out"), the film eschews original scoring for one of its most touching sequences, Karloff's meeting with the blind peasant who charms him with a violin solo of Schubert's "Ave Maria". (The Schubert cues are not heard on the CD.) "Fire in The Hut" underscores the hellish disruption of this doomed relationship, and the track's second half, "Graveyard", presents one of the disc's real revela-

tions: an oddly lovely and sympathetic transformation of the Monster theme, which, in the film, is obscured by Karloff's noisy desecration of the graveyard to which he flees from the mob.

Profuse scoring continues to the end of the film. "Danse Macabre" underscores the indefatigably arch Pretorius as he dines *al fresco* on a coffin-top in the underground crypt, an electric organ variation of his theme infusing the ghoulish proceedings with a contemporary, almost Doors-like sound. (The cue includes a sensuous reprise of the "Bride" motif for divided strings, as Pretorius seduces the Monster with the promise of a mate.) "The Creation" is a 10-minute tour-de-force that fuses all the cues from the film's penultimate sequence, with the "Bride" theme developed to the max as tilted camera angles, expressionistic lighting, *Flash Gordon* decor, and thrilling music erupt in one of the most delirious sequences ever conceived for a fantasy film.

*THE BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN* is not only a great genre film, it's a great film—a unique fusion of Gothic Expressionism and high black comedy, which, like Waxman's score, is beautifully crafted and ahead of its time in so many ways. While previous Universal horror films looked back to the stolid staginess of early talkies, *BRIDE* was (and is) cinema unbound, radically advancing both the technique and content of 30s film, just as Waxman's score served as a remarkably advanced and fully-realized touchstone in the then-fledgling art of original film-scoring.

Conductor Kenneth Alwyn renders a credible recreation of Universal

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**BRIDE OF FRANKENSTEIN** composer Franz Waxman with Boris Karloff

music director Bakaleinikoff's original performance, at times expanding the orchestra from its original 40 pieces to nearly 70. Minor liberties have been taken with the orchestration (notably the addition of synthesizer parts), but inasmuch as Waxman had originally hoped to include an electronic (Ondes Martenot) part, the inclusion seems legitimate and certainly works in performance. A brief suite from another Karloff film, 1936's *THE INVISIBLE RAY*, follows *BRIDE*, and a fine booklet with stills and great behind-the-scenes photos, musical examples, and notes by Richard Bush is also included.

There has been a welcome revival of Waxman's music during the last 15 years, and much has been released on CD. Among the best anthologies are Charles Gerhardt's "Classic Film Scores of Franz Waxman", which includes the first landmark re-recording of *BRIDE* excerpts, as well as clips from *PRINCE VALIANT*, *SUNSET BOULEVARD*, and other films, and "The Film Music of Franz Waxman" (Volume Three in RCA's Film Composers Series), featuring a fine overview of his 50s work, with highlights from five RCA original soundtrack albums of the period (including *PEYTON PLACE*), all conducted by Waxman himself. Elmer Bernstein is reportedly also working on a new Waxman anthology for RCA.

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On the new 20th Century Fox Film Scores label comes a series of remastered original soundtracks from a

variety of Fox classics. Probably the most remarkable in this fine clutch of releases (which includes the notorious 1968 turkey *STAR!*) is the first original soundtrack recording of Bernard Herrmann's megaclassic science fiction score for *THE DAY THE EARTH STOOD STILL* (1951). *DAY* may just be the greatest sci-fi score ever, and one of the most dynamic scores created for any genre. The new recording features all the cues in the film (plus a deleted one), and affords the opportunity to hear this score in the way its many fans have always dreamed of experiencing it, sans the film's sometimes overbearing sound effects. Not the least of the

CD's merits is its showcasing of the eerily stinging sound of the Theremins that formed an integral part of Herrmann's original orchestrations, the spacy timbre of which seems impossible to accurately duplicate with modern electronics. (Herrmann himself re-recorded excerpts from *DAY* with Moog synthesizers, which allegedly drove him nuts.)

Also available in this initial batch of Fox releases is a 1944 twin-bill CD of another brooding Herrmann score, *JANE EYRE*, and the first original soundtrack release of David Raksin's hyperclassic, sophisticated *LAURA* in the form of an uninterrupted half-hour suite, the "LAURA Theme and Variations". Fox films featured some of the finest scores of the studio era, from the early 40s Harry Warren/Ralph Rainger musicals through varied orchestral classics. Thanks to the Newmans—Alfred, Lionel, and Company—the studio also evolved what was probably the finest orchestral sound in Hollywood. From Alfred Newman's *THE ROBE* (1952), also available for the first time in stereo among these releases, to Goldsmith's *STAGECOACH* (1966), Fox's CinemaScope era virtually revitalized film scoring with some of the most original scores of Hollywood' Golden Twilight. Hopefully we can look forward to ensuing Fox classics in this series, and I hope to cover *LAURA* in more depth in a future column.

*Ross Care has composed the scores for short films, documentaries, and musicals. He also writes, mostly on music and film, for various publications, and for the Library of Congress for which he is currently preparing an article on American film scoring in the 1950s.*

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Originally released in Europe as **MUSIC FROM THE HAMMER FILMS**, this is a collection that no Hammer fan should be without. For those fearing poor sound quality from the original, 30-year-old film soundtracks, worry not: The album consists entirely of new recordings in full digital format. (For you audiophiles, that's DDD.) So, enthusiasts can now hear classic Hammer music as it should be heard—crisp, clean, and hiss-free.

The accompanying CD booklet is, in itself, a "bloody" wonder. One will be sure to recognize the bloodied visage of Christopher Lee from the **TASTE THE BLOOD OF DRACULA** (1970) movie poster on the disc's cover. Beyond that, it gets even better.

The mammoth (in liner-note terms) 20-page booklet begins with a page-and-a-half history of Hammer Studios—in print so small, unfortunately, that some may need a magnifying glass to read it. The rest of the notes are superbly laid out, with wonderful black-and-white and color stills, succinct plot synopses, and fantastic poster reproductions from each film represented. Starting with the **DRACULA** (1958) movie poster and concluding with a familiar shot of Peter Cushing on the back cover, the entire booklet is a tight and effective overview, effectively complementing the music.

And what music! The disc begins with James Bernard's 12-minute "Dracula Suite", incorporating music from the original 1958 **DRACULA** (retitled **HORROR OF DRACULA** in the States) and from **DRACULA: PRINCE OF DARKNESS** (1966). So

one can mistake **DRACULA**'s "Main Theme" as the disc begins; as the notes state, it is "one of the most instantly recognizable 'horror' film themes ever written." Attention must also be paid to the highly dramatic "Dracula's Rage" section of the suite (the scoring for the **DRACULA** scene in which Christopher Lee attacks vampire bride Valerie Gaunt) and the moody "Funeral in Carpathia" (which opens **DRACULA: PRINCE OF DARKNESS**). These two pieces are just as effective as **DRACULA**'s main theme and surely deserve as much consideration.

Following "The Dracula Suite", the disc continues with the only non-vampiric score represented: Christopher Gunning's 10-minute suite from **HANDS OF THE RIPPER** (1971). Gunning's music merits inclusion on the strength of "Anna's Theme" alone. Though syrupy and sickly sweet by modern standards, it serves to elevate Anna to the status of "innocent maiden"—despite the fact that she's the daughter of Jack the Ripper!

The album returns to vampires, and James Bernard's signature brass, with the full-blooded "Finale: Dracula and the Crucifix" from **DRACULA HAS RISEN FROM THE GRAVE** (1968). This five-minute piece begins slowly, with quiet, suspense-building strings, then peaks with loud, tension-breaking horns. Added punch is provided by the church bells tolling Dracula's death knell—a climax in true Hammer fashion.

David Whitaker's "Prologue" from **VAMPIRE CIRCUS** (1972) serves as the anthology's penultimate track. Also heard on Silva Screen's **VAMPIRE CIRCUS: THE ESSENTIAL**

**VAMPIRE THEME COLLECTION**, this version of the "Prologue" has been reorchestrated by the composer for an ensemble larger than that which originally recorded it for the film. Now, fans are afforded a rare opportunity to hear the piece as the composer originally intended it—richer, fuller, and far more dramatic.

Closing the album is yet another James Bernard composition: the suite from **TASTE THE BLOOD OF DRACULA**. Like "The Dracula Suite", this piece also contains moments of sublime serenity ("Romance at Dusk") and stunning suspense ("Ride to the Ruined Church").

Some classic scores are missing (especially 1960's **BRIDES OF DRACULA** and 1961's **CURSE OF THE WEREWOLF**), but, all in all, **DRACULA: CLASSIC SCORES FROM HAMMER HORROR** is a fine addition to the vast number of film soundtracks out there. One complaint: The entire 17 minutes of the **TASTE THE BLOOD OF DRACULA** score is encoded on only one track, but, on **MUSIC FROM THE HAMMER FILMS** (the UK version), each movement is a track unto itself. Thus, the European version clocks in at 14 tracks, while the American version stands at only nine. If one likes to skip tracks or wants to hear only certain portions of the suite, this can be a problem.

Still, this minor flaw doesn't affect the music, the arrangements, or the near flawlessness of the sound engineering. As a whole, this collection stands as an icon of excellent film scoring. Hammer completists should not be without a copy—and should clamor for more

—Roman Gheesling



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SCARLET STREET VISITS SWEET OLD AUNTIE ROO IN HER SCRUMPTIOUS GINGERBREAD HOUSE FOR THE TASTY CONCLUSION OF OUR TALK WITH DIRECTOR

# CURTIS HARRINGTON

INTERVIEW BY  
KEVIN G. SHINNICK

*Scarlet Street*: After *NIGHT TIDE*, you worked on a Russian film called *PLANET OF STORMS*. You reedited it.

**Curtis Harrington**: I did two films for Roger Corman. He had acquired the American rights to two Russian films. One was called *PLANET OF STORMS*; it came out as *VOYAGE TO A PRE-HISTORIC PLANET*, with additional scenes filmed for the American version. Incidentally, these two films were not released internationally; as far as I know, he only acquired American rights. They were made strictly for the American market.

**SS**: With additional scenes . . .

**CH**: We did additional scenes with Basil Rathbone and Faith Domergue, Rathbone being in a space station on the moon, communicating with Faith Domergue, who was an astronaut circling the so-called planet of storms, which was Venus, in a spaceship. But 90 percent of that film is just the original Russian footage dubbed in English. I didn't even have my name on it; it's just that I shot those additional scenes with Domergue and Rathbone.

**SS**: You used the name John Sebastian, as a matter of fact.

**CH**: Yes! I didn't know that it was the name of a pop musician. I'm not into pop music, so it was sort of shocking when I found out that this was a well-known pop musician, this John Sebastian. I made it up on the spur of the moment. I thought of Sebastian because of Oscar Wilde's pseud-

onym; when he went to France after his disgrace, he used the name Sebastian Melmoth.

**SS**: The second film was *QUEEN OF BLOOD*.

**CH**: That film was my film, except insofar as I used the outer-space footage from the Russian film . . .

**SS**: *THE DREAM COME TRUE*.

**CH**: I used that footage, but I wrote an entirely different story. At least 60 or 70 percent of that footage is my footage, and the story bears no resemblance to the Soviet film.

**SS**: Did you have anything to do with the casting of the actors and actresses?

**CH**: Everything.

**SS**: Everything? Had you seen any films with Florence Marly?

**CH**: It was a social contact. In point of fact, I had only seen her in *LES MAUDITS* (*THE DAMNED*), the French film. I knew her socially and was always struck by her wonderful high cheekbones and exotic looks. I wanted someone who was the antithesis of anyone who looked remotely American, because she was supposed to be a creature from another planet. Many people have commented on how effective she was in her silent role.

**SS**: She was marvelous.

**CH**: I had to fight Roger, too.

**SS**: Really?

**CH**: Florence was much older than she looked, and I think he was a little afraid of that, because he wanted to have the suggestion of the sexual element. Of course, she looked so great that it didn't matter.

**SS**: You shot your footage in six days.

**CH**: Well, we worked incredible hours. We would start early every morning and we'd still be shooting at 1AM, you

know? Poor Basil Rathbone, who was so sweet and nice, he said at the end of the production, "Even a dog would be better treated than I was!"

**SS**: Oh, no!

**CH**: Oh, yes! He was a very old man, and we had him working these unconscionable hours. We worked that poor man to death. He was very good-spirited about it while he was doing it, but he only worked for two days; we put all his scenes together in two days, and we probably got a good four days' work out of him in those two days. He subsequently brought a complaint through the Directors Guild, asking for all kinds of overtime pay. I'm sure that Roger hoped not to pay, but he had to pay it.

**SS**: You shot both *QUEEN OF BLOOD* and *PREHISTORIC PLANET* at the same time?

**CH**: Yes.

**SS**: Did Rathbone memorize all his lines, or were there cue cards for him?

**CH**: No, he didn't have cue cards, but when he gave the speech in *QUEEN OF BLOOD*, in the huge auditorium, he had those lines in front of him so he wouldn't have to memorize them.

**SS**: What did you think of him personally?

**CH**: He was a very, very gracious man. I would sit with him between takes and he would reminisce about his days working with Errol Flynn in *ROBIN HOOD* and all that sort of thing. I think he realized that it was quite a comedown from his earlier days, but I guess he either needed the money or he just wanted to work. He was the quintessential pro.

**SS**: Next you directed *GAMES*, your first major studio film. How did that come about?

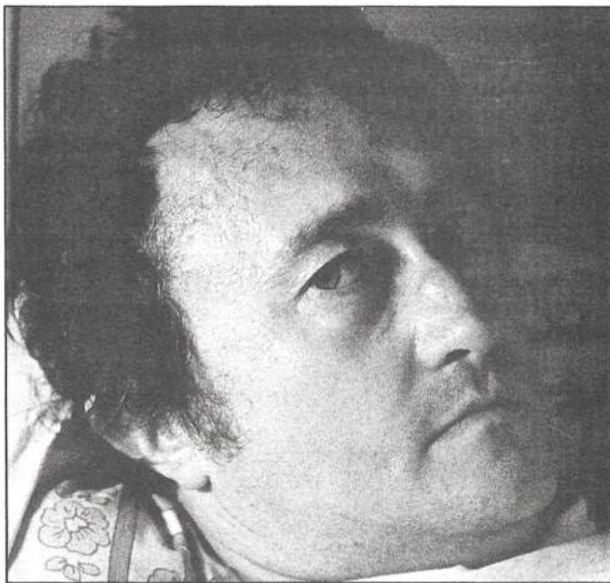
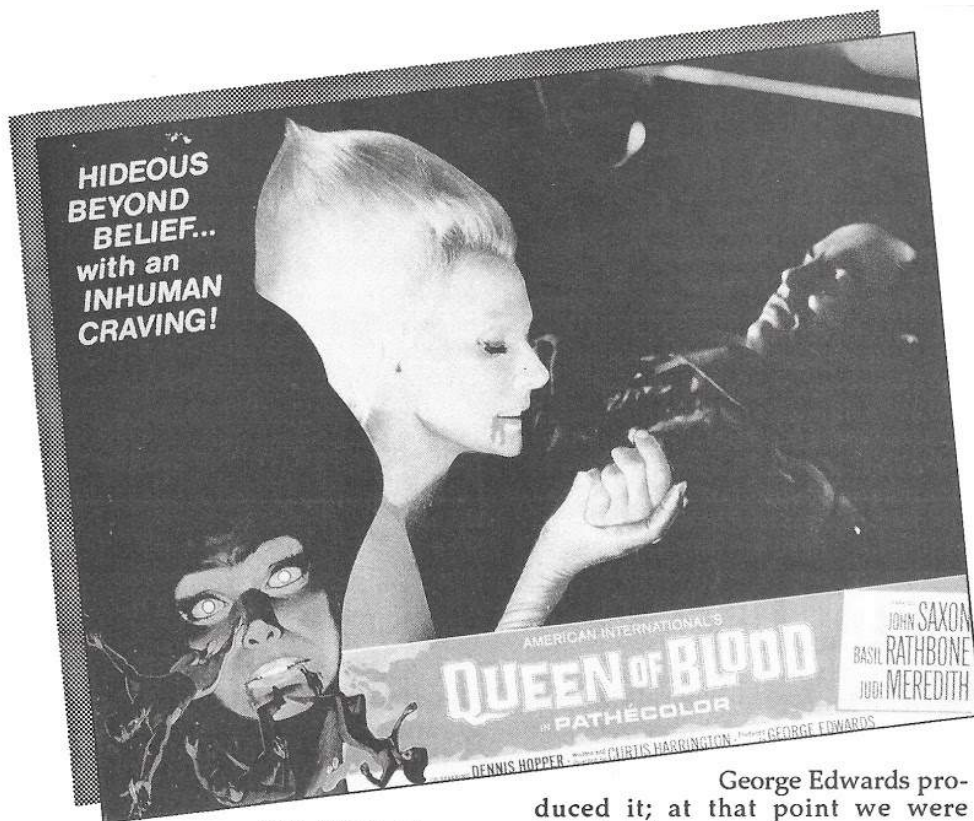


Photo courtesy of Curtis Harrington





**CH:** Well, George Edwards and I showed *QUEEN OF BLOOD* to Ned Tanen, one of the executives at Universal, and he was very impressed with the quality and what we had done for so little money on such a short schedule. To confirm his opinion, he said, "Well, what else have you done?" I said, "Well, I made this film called *NIGHT TIDE*." So we showed him *NIGHT TIDE*, even though George had had nothing to do with it. The primary thing concerning *QUEEN OF BLOOD* is that

George Edwards produced it; at that point we were thought of as a team.

**SS:** Right.

**CH:** So, Tanen saw *NIGHT TIDE* and that absolutely confirmed everything for him. He offered us a contract to make a film at Universal Pictures. At that point, we didn't have anything specific in mind. George and I sat around, trying to think up something original to offer. We collaborated on a two-page outline of the story line for *GAMES*. Lew Wasserman, who was the head of the studio, liked it and commissioned us to hire one of

the studio writers to do the screenplay with our cooperation.

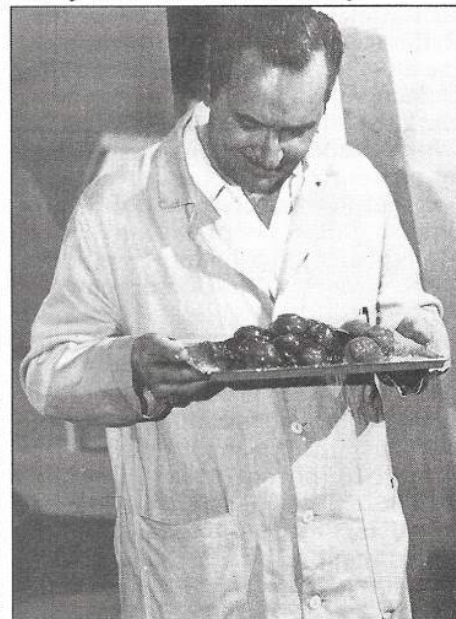
**SS:** There was some pressure from Universal over the casting.

**CH:** The basic idea for *GAMES* was mine; it was about a mysterious woman invading the household of a young couple. I conceived it for Marlene Dietrich, because of my tremendous admiration for the work of Josef von Sternberg and my consequent admiration for Dietrich. When we finished the screenplay, we had our meeting with Lew Wasserman about casting, and I begged him to submit it to Marlene Dietrich. I'll never forget it; he sat there and said, "Nobody will be interested in seeing her. No. I won't let you do that." He said, "I want Jeanne Moreau." So it was submitted to Jeanne Moreau, and she turned it down. I really don't remember why, but I wasn't interested in Jeanne Moreau, anyway. My own agent at the time, Hugh French, was the American representative of Simone Signoret, so I suggested her to Lew Wasserman and he said, "Fine. That would be great." We got a script off to her in Paris . . .

**SS:** And she agreed to do it.

**CH:** Well, it's an interesting story. Simone Signoret didn't immediately accept it. She said, "I don't know who this director Curtis Harrington is. Can I see one of his films?" Well, I'd gone to Paris in the 50s, and had become very friendly with Henri Langlois, of the Cinematheque Francaise. I was also very friendly with Mary Meerson, who was sort of Langlois' right hand at the Cinema-

**LEFT:** John Saxon and Basil Rathbone ran afoul of the *QUEEN OF BLOOD* in 1966. **RIGHT:** Making a cameo appearance in *QUEEN OF BLOOD*, Forry Ackerman is overjoyed with the lunch provided by the studio commissary.





theque. She was the widow of Lazare Meerson, the famous set designer who had worked on Rene Clair's films. She and Henri were friendly with Simone Signoret. Later, when I went to the Venice Film Festival in 1963 to show *NIGHT TIDE*, I traveled back through Paris and the Cinematheque Francaise, through Henri Langlois, arranged a special screening. Among the people who came was Georges Franju, the director of *EYES WITHOUT A FACE*. I left the print at the Cinematheque Francaise for their collection. Henri had told me that, during World War Two, when the Germans were occupying Paris and before the formation of the Cinematheque, he would show forbidden films like *BATTLESHIP POTEMKIN* in his apartment. Simone Signoret used to come to those screenings, so I knew that they knew Simone very well. When she said she wanted to see something by me, I immediately contacted Mary Meerson and said, "You have to set up a screening of *NIGHT TIDE* for Simone Signoret. And tell her about me." I knew that they would say, "Oh! Curtis is wonderful, and you've got to work with him." And that's exactly what happened.

**SS:** Did you include elements of *DIABOLIQUE* in *GAMES* because of her casting?

**CH:** No, the story was completely finished. She was not in mind at all.

**SS:** James Caan and Katharine Ross played the young couple...

**CH:** Universal is a notoriously pinch-penny studio. Because we'd made *QUEEN OF BLOOD* so cheaply, the idea was to make *GAMES* as cheaply as possible. They wanted Katharine Ross because she was a contract player, so I had to use Katharine Ross. They imposed Katharine Ross on me. But then I had this young leading man to cast, and it was hard to find one who'd be cheap enough to fit in their budget. I thought of James Caan because he had leading-man potential; I wanted a young leading man, not just an actor. He'd been in about three films. They ap-

parently had him under contract at one time and dropped him, and didn't like him or want him, and I had to fight for him. I did succeed finally in getting them to agree to let me try to get him, and he agreed to do it. It was the first time James Caan had ever worn proper clothes in his life. He was very much a scruffy blue-jean type in real life and in everything he had done up to that point. Anyway, we dressed him up to make him a New York type, and it was so interesting—he felt the trans-

**SS:** Had you considered casting Dennis Hopper in the film?

**CH:** No, because I didn't think he had the weight for the part; he would have been wrong for it. Dennis Hopper is essentially a character actor, as you can see by what's become of him now. James Caan has remained a leading man to this day.

**SS:** Did you have any problems directing Caan?

**CH:** Well, once I had a little problem with him—but other than that, no. You have to realize that this was early

in his career. When people become stars, then the problems arise.

**SS:** You had wonderful character actors in *GAMES*.

**CH:** Well, I had Kent Smith.

**SS:** And Estelle Winwood.

**CH:** Estelle Winwood, yes, because I admired her so much.

**SS:** And Ian Wolfe.

**CH:** And Ian Wolfe; exactly. I remember, Estelle Winwood was so funny. She was 85 when we made that film and I remember her saying, "Oh, Mr. Harrington. I hope you won't make me look too old." (Laughs)

**SS:** In the party scene someone makes a remark about a flying saucer. Was that a *QUEEN OF BLOOD* in-joke?

**CH:** No, actually it wasn't. All those bits of conversation as the camera moves back among the crowd were subjects of interest to me. I asked Gene Kearney to write those lines. He wrote one about the flying saucer, and another about Herman Hesse; it was all those little esoteric bits and

then, when you get to the table, they're playing the Marienbad game.

**SS:** Do you have a fascination with Aimee Semple McPherson? In *WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HELEN?*, Sister Alma is based on her, and Caan makes a quick reference to her in *GAMES*.

**SS:** Now, that was devised by Gene Kearney. I had nothing to do with that line. In *WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HELEN?*, the character wasn't based on Aimee Semple McPherson in particular. Did you ever hear of a crackpot cult religion of the 30s called The Mighty I Am?

**SS:** No.



formation, you know? At the end of the film, he bought the entire wardrobe that we'd bought for him!

**SS:** That's funny!

**CH:** And he'd never even worn a necktie in his life!

**SS:** Is it true that the basic plot was inspired by Dennis Hopper and his wife?

**CH:** Well, not the plot, but the situation of the glamorous young couple who collect pop art—that was based on the Hoppers.

**SS:** So they weren't into strange games.

**CH:** Not at all. There were elements here and there of reality, but it was a completely fictional creation.





**LEFT:** Sporting masks by Bob Baker, Simone Signoret, James Caan, and Katharine Ross spend a quiet evening at home playing *GAMES* (1967). **RIGHT:** Signoret and her crystal ball are drawn to evil, much to her cohorts' dismay.

**CH:** Well, Sister Alma was based on the leader of The Mighty I Am. The female leader: Mrs. Ballard. She always appeared in pure white, with a huge white corsage. I guess Aimee sometimes wore white and a corsage, but I don't think she always dressed that way, whereas Mrs. Ballard always dressed that way.

**SS:** So you came up with the idea of the *Haven of the Open Hand*.

**CH:** Yes. (Laughs) I have a very jaundiced view of organized religion in general.

**SS:** You use a lot of fairy-tale imagery in your films.

**CH:** Yes, that's all very conscious on my part. I'm very interested in the mythic underpinnings of everything; I want as much of that in my films as

possible. That's why I don't make temporal movies. I'm not interested in temporal subjects. I want everything that I do to have that underpinning on the mythic level.

**SS:** Who made the masks that were used in *GAMES*?

**CH:** They were made by Bob Baker, who has a marionette theater in Los Angeles. They were based on the famous Benda masks. There was a man named Wladyslaw Benda in the 1920s, who created quite a stir in New York as an artist who made masks. Very beautiful masks, and these are made in exactly the same style as the original Benda masks. They're not copies; they were made for the movie, but they're very much in the style. He captured the style wonder-

fully. You can read about the Benda masks in old issues of *Vanity Fair* from the late 20s and early 30s, and I'd often thought, "What happened to those wonderful masks? They were really works of art." I'd never heard of them being shown, and, just two days ago, someone handed me an announcement of a New York gallery having a show of Benda masks.

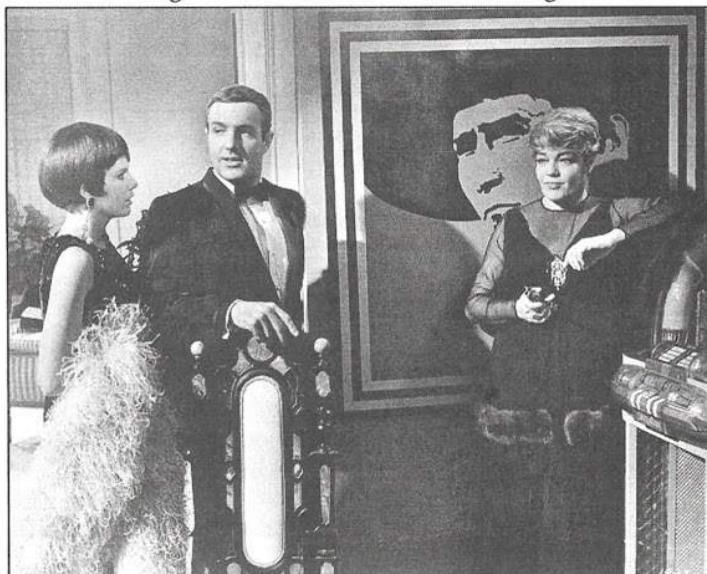
**SS:** Oh, really?

**CH:** I have one of the masks from *GAMES*, the one that Simone Signoret wears. I have it hanging on the wall in my living room and everyone admires it.

**SS:** In *GAMES*, there were a number of references to some of your favorite horror

*Continued on page 96*

**LEFT:** Who's cheating while playing *GAMES* (1967)? Is it Katharine Ross, James Caan, or Simone Signoret? **RIGHT:** Curtis Harrington chats with his two leading ladies on the set of 1967's *GAMES*.







# WHO SLEW AUNTIE ROO?

AN APPRECIATION BY RICHARD VALLEY

*"'A little thin,' the witch said, 'but once I fatten her up she'll make a dainty morsel.'"*

—WHO SLEW AUNTIE ROO?

Shelley Winters sings! Considering the public's fondness (or lack thereof) for the Oscar-winning actress' melodic gifts, that's a statement not entirely unsuited for use as a horror-movie catch phrase.

In fact, Winters, who counts among her credits the failed 1970 Broadway musical MINNIE'S BOYS (a retelling in song and dance of the Marx Brothers' early vaudeville days), opens the 1971 American International Picture WHO SLEW AUNTIE ROO? with a little tune, a lullaby crooned to her daughter—whose desiccated corpse rests in a dainty white crib in a toy-laden nursery.

Some mothers simply can't let go of their children!

The haunting, pretitled sequence of WHO SLEW AUNTIE ROO? is directed by Curtis Harrington with such subtle mastery, and performed by Shelley Winters with such quiet grace (song included), that it comes as something of a surprise to those familiar with the film's poor reputation. Not that Harrington and Winters haven't displayed such skills before, most memorably in the same year's WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HELEN?, but AUNTIE ROO is an anomaly in the director's career—neither the cult classic that HELEN became nor the forgotten gem that is THE KILLING KIND (1973). Unlike the latter, a study in psychosis with Ann Sothern and John Savage, WHO SLEW AUNTIE ROO? turns up in the reference books, but it is little praised. Leonard Maltin's *Movie*





© 1971 American International

**LEFT:** Curtis Harrington was less than enthralled with Mark Lester, who had no desire to act. **RIGHT:** Auntie Roo (Shelley Winters) offers a teddy to Katy Combs (Chloe Franks). Harrington found the girl to be a more natural actor than Lester. **PREVIOUS PAGE:** Auntie Roo witnesses the death of her daughter (Charlotte Sayce).

and *Video Guide* (Signet, 1994), often derisive of horror, adds a exclamation point of shock to its mini-review, dismissing the film as "intended to be a travesty of 'Hansel and Gretel!'" (God forbid that such "immortals" should be mocked!) Phil Hardy's *Encyclopedia of Horror Movies* (Harper & Row, 1986) is considerably more kind, but argues that "Harrington tends to overdo the Grand Guignol sequences"—as if grandiose effects aren't precisely what's required, both in horror films and fairy tales.

AUNTIE ROO's prelude alone would justify Harrington's approach. Cinematographer Desmond Dickinson's fluid camera travels the nursery, floating past rocking horses, dolls, and teddy bears, approaching the beatific Rosie Forrest (Winters) as she smiles at the tiny figure in the crib. (We see the child from Rosie's point of view, a beautiful, blonde-haired little girl.) Rosie gently whispers to her little lamb:

"Now, darling, be a good girl and sleep tight. Mommy will see you in the morning."

The doting mother leaves the room and, backed by a suddenly ominous score, the camera circles the crib and pulls in tight to reveal Rosie's daughter as she really is—a rotting thing, long dead. Cut to a troubled night sky filled with lightning and the sound of rolling thunder. In the midst of a storm, the credits roll.

Grand Guignol? Definitely. Appropriate? Without a shadow of a doubt.

WHO SLEW AUNTIE ROO? is far from a one-scene wonder; there is much for adherents of horror to enjoy here (if a shortage of actual bloodshed). Nevertheless, the plot is often unwieldy—the result, possibly, of Harrington not having initiated the project.

Briefly, the story, set in the 1920s, concerns Rosie Forrest, a former vaudevillian whose husband, a magician, has mysteriously (and appropriately) vanished—as has Rosie's daughter Katharine (Charlotte Sayce). We know the truth, of course: Katharine is dead, her remains lovingly preserved by her devoted mother. With the besotted

help of Mr. Benton (Ralph Richardson) a phony psychic in cahoots with servants Albie (Michael Gothard) and Clarine (Judy Cornwell), Rosie seeks to communicate with Katharine's spirit. Unfortunately, the little girl's voice is often heard (courtesy of Clarine), but her ethereal form stubbornly refuses to put in an appearance.

Rather abruptly, the scene shifts to the nearby Home for Orphans and Destitute Children, at which the inmates vie to be among the lucky few to spend Christmas with the wealthy Rosie—or, as she prefers to be called, Auntie Roo. Among the homeless waifs are the troublesome Christopher and Katy Combs (Mark Lester and Chloe Franks), whose chances of visiting Forrest Grange (popularly called the Gingerbread House) are all but nonexistent. (Christopher is "an inveterate liar. He invents fantasies about witches and ogres and giants.")

After the orphans are chosen by Miss Henley (the stone-faced Rosalie Crutchley), they are driven to the Grange by Inspector Willoughby (Lionel Jeffries) and Dr. Mason (Pat Heywood), both of whom wonder what became of little Katharine Forrest. (Among the foundlings is young Peter Brookshire, played by Richard Beaumont. Like Mark Lester, who came to prominence in 1968's *OLIVER!*, the singing, dancing version of *Oliver Twist*, Beaumont hailed from a musicalized adaptation of Dickens—in his case, *SCROOGE*, the 1970 reworking of *A Christmas Carol*, in which he played Tiny Tim.)

When Christopher and Katy, who have stowed away in Willoughby's car, are discovered, Rosie invites them to join the party. Soon, both the middle-aged songstress and the young boy fall prey to obsessions: Rosie, that Katy can take the place of Katharine and may, indeed, be Katharine reincarnated; Christopher, that Rosie is the child-gobbling witch of 'Hansel and Gretel', the story with which he has been regaling his sister. ("You know, there was once a little girl very like you who lived in this house," says Rosie to her "daughter". "What happened to her?" asks the suspicious Christopher, his delusion and Rosie's meeting at the common point of Katy.)





**LEFT:** Sadistic servant Albie (Michael Gothard) has some innocent fun with Christopher Combs (Mark Lester) in *WHO SLEW AUNTIE ROO?* (1971). **RIGHT:** Hugh Griffith plays Mr. Harrison, the pigman, who flirts with servant girl Clarine (Judy Cornwell). Griffith had appeared with Mark Lester in *OLIVER!* (1968).

Come the morning after Christmas, the children are packed into Willoughby's car—all but Katy Combs, who has disappeared. Rosie promises to find Katy and send her back to the orphanage; improbably, this satisfies Willoughby, and he speeds on his way. Of course, Christopher knows the truth (that Rosie has kidnapped his sister) and thinks he knows a truth darker still (that Rosie intends to fatten up Katy and eat her). The boy steals a bicycle and returns to the Grange, where, like his sister, he is taken prisoner by Rosie. Now, it is only Hansel, Gretel, and the witch who occupy the Gingerbread House. (Albie, who knows that Rosie has "adopted" Katy, has blackmailed his employer, spilled the beans about Benton, and fled with Clarine.)

Willoughby investigates, but, with the incompetence traditionally expected of inspectors (and characters played by Lionel Jeffries), he fails to find the missing children. Mr. Benton is luckier; he arrives just as Christopher makes a break for it. Much to the boy's chagrin, neither Rosie nor the drunken medium pay him much mind:

*Rosie:* And to think I was so concerned about you that I was going to give you my last two bottles of Napoleon brandy for Christmas! All these years I thought you were trying to help me.

*Benton:* I did help you. But now I shall leave you; I see your aura is angry. I'm at peace. I'm not angry. To prove it, I shall accept your offering.

Grabbing the twin bottles, Benton staggers on his way. (Ralph Richardson makes more of his scant scenes in *WHO SLEW AUNTIE ROO?* than most actors make of an entire movie; without once going too far, he creates a memorable, almost Dickensian caricature.)

The film's final minutes are a cat-and-mouse game between Rosie and Christopher, with the angel-faced boy slowing getting the upper hand. (Small wonder; Rosie makes a fuss over keeping the kids locked in the house, yet she sends Christopher outside to gather firewood!) Trapped in the larder after a failed escape attempt, Christo-

pher persuades his sister to call Rosie "Mommy" ("Mummy", actually)—enticing the increasingly disoriented woman into the tiny room. The children knock Rosie down, lock the larder door, and, when Rosie starts to chop through with a cleaver, pile wood in front of it and set it afire. The witch goes up in flames, and Hansel and Gretel escape from the Gingerbread House.

Outside, they meet Mr. Harrison (Hugh Griffith), the "pigman" who earlier provided Mrs. Forrest with the makings for her Christmas feast. Harrison is delivering a pig that Rosie had planned to serve for New Year's Eve dinner, prompting Katy to question Christopher's version of recent events:

*Katy:* You said she was going to eat us.  
*Christopher:* She was . . . later.

Inspector Willoughby and Dr. Mason arrive to take the "terrified" tykes back to the orphanage, but their future is "Rosie": hidden in the teddy bear that Auntie Roo gave to Katy are the Forrest family jewels, stolen by Christopher when he returned for his sister.

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*WHO SLEW AUNTIE ROO?* (released in some quarters as *WHOEVER SLEW AUNTIE ROO?*, a title preferred by Harrington) suffers most from the performance of Mark Lester, an actor of limited range. Cast in *OLIVER!* as an orphan because of his delicate features and passive innocence, Lester all but vanished in the whirl of that musical's spectacle and the scene-stealing trickery of Ron Moody and Jack Wild (as Fagan and the Artful Dodger). Cast as another orphan in *AUNTIE ROO*, Lester isn't up to the demands of a more complex character. His Christopher Combs, lost in a world of fancy, elicits no sympathy—even when he tries desperately to save his sister. (The fact that his concern for Katy's welfare stems from a complete misreading of the situation, coupled with the fact that his mission is temporarily curtailed so that

*Continued on page 113*



## CURTIS HARRINGTON

*Continued from page 92*

films. One of the lab props is from the 1931 *FRANKENSTEIN*.

CH: Kenneth Strickfadden, who did *FRANKENSTEIN*, was alive then. We hired him. We went out to his studio in Santa Monica and saw all those original props. It was very thrilling for me, because I didn't know that he was alive. In the opening party sequence, when they're hanging those tubes and the lights go down and they're illuminated—I thought he would do it mechanically, with hidden batteries or something like that. But he said, "No, no. I will do what it says in the script. I will electrify the whole room." And he did! I mean, there was electricity coursing through the bodies of all the actors in the scene! And I asked, "Is this dangerous?" He said, "No." But there were a few screams occasionally . . .

SS: Strickfadden is one of the heroes of early horror.

CH: He really was the original mad doctor!

SS: Was the black mass in the movie a reference to *THE BLACK CAT*?

CH: Oh, that! It really wasn't, though I'm very aware of that sequence. You know, Universal at the time had a man named Ernest Nims, who had been the head of the editorial department. He was now an executive, and his job—if you can imagine this nonsense—his job was to read a script and say, "There's no point in shooting this scene, because it'll never end up in the final movie." Which is ridiculous! Utterly ridiculous! You don't have that kind of perspective about a film until it's shot. But anyway, he was monitoring the dailies every day, and he said, "This film is going over length." Right in the middle of shooting! "This scene with the masks. That's not important. Don't shoot that." So an edict came down from the front office, saying, "You cannot shoot this scene." And I said, "To hell with that." (Laughs) Fortunately, we had a closed set; we had cops at the door, so I issued instructions that no one was allowed in, not even Mr. Wasserman, and I shot the scene. Then they saw it in the dailies and

loved it—but imagine if I'd paid attention to that idiot!

SS: Was Universal pleased with *GAMES*?

CH: They were very pleased with it. It didn't make a lot of money, so then they weren't so pleased with it, but they certainly were pleased with the original film. I think it was ahead of its time. My theory about it not being more of a success is that the mass audience was put off by the ending. They were offended by it.



Curtis Harrington and Shelley Winters take a break on the set of *WHO SLEW AUNTIE ROO?* (1971).

SS: Really?

CH: The girl goes off to the insane asylum, James Caan is killed, and Simone Signoret, who is the evil one, goes off with the goods. The mass audience didn't like it. They were morally offended by it. I think that's why none of my films have been a big commercial success; they almost all have tragic endings. We used to say we should make a series with Simone Signoret running around ruining peoples' lives. (Laughs)

SS: Now, the next production you were going to do at Universal was a film called *THE GUESTS*.

CH: That was abandoned, unfortunately. The script was completed by Joseph Stefano, who wrote the script for *PSYCHO*. The studio finally decided that they would do *THE GUESTS* as a TV Movie of the Week.

It was during one of those periods when there had been a lot of complaints from yokels in the Midwest that TV movies were too violent. So, we were getting ready to make it, scouting locations for it, when suddenly we got a call saying, "We have decided we can't make this." I said, "Why not?" They said, "Because it's too violent." I said, "There's absolutely no violence in the whole script." And this is what they said: "There's the threat of violence, so we can't make it."

SS: That's incredible.

CH: I'm totally convinced that there's a conspiracy to make TV as bland and uninteresting as possible in order to make the commercials more interesting. Everything is toned down. I'll never forget, I did an episode of *BARETTA*, and I cast Timothy Carey. Remember Timothy Carey?

SS: Oh, yes.

CH: He was one of my favorite character players. He was totally outrageous, you know? Totally outrageous and larger than life. Bobby Blake, who shares my disdain for the establishment, was delighted with the idea, so that's why I could do it. Most studios wouldn't even let me hire Timothy Carey, they were so terrified of him. He was kind of a madman, but a wonderful madman. He was so outrageously wonderful—and yet, they cut all that outrageousness out. They toned it down, and

toned it down, and toned it down, until nothing of that outrageousness was left. After I had done my cut, they did a totally different cut, to make him more bland. Imagine trying to make Timothy Carey bland!

SS: *HOW AWFUL ABOUT ALAN* was made between *GAMES* and *WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HELEN*? Did you enjoy working in television?

CH: I enjoyed making *HOW AWFUL ABOUT ALAN*, because I had a wonderful cast. It was a joy to work with Julie Harris and Tony Perkins.

SS: Was Perkins still trying to shed the horror/suspense roles?

CH: Oh, I don't know; we didn't talk about that. The thing I remember best about Tony was that he had a wonderful sense of humor, and he was a consummate professional. He had just come off appearing in



CATCH 22, and I was very concerned because of the tightness of the schedule. I said, "You know, Tony, you've been in so many big-budget films. This is an entirely different world, the world of television. The schedule is so short and we have to work so fast!" And he said, "Don't worry. I understand that"—and he really understood it! I mean, he was so fast on the set; he was letter-perfect in his lines. He was always ready. And the same thing is true of Julie Harris.

SS: Anthony Perkins played a blind man.

CH: Yes, and Tony was truly blind in those scenes. Since he wore contact lenses ordinarily, he went out and, at his own expense, had opaque contact lenses made, which he wore when he was shooting. He had to be led onto the set by his dresser.

SS: Did you find it difficult showing the point of view of a blind man?

CH: Yes, very. (Laughs) It was George Edwards' idea to film the novel. I said, "How can we make this? I mean, it's just subjective." But we finally worked it out with blurred images. That element disturbed me; I thought it was difficult to convey in film. Very easy to convey in a novel, but . . .

SS: Visually, it's hard. Is it true that Shelley Winters brought you in on WHO SLEW AUNTIE ROO?

CH: Not really, no. At that point, I had a contract with American International. I was supposed to have made the new version of WUTHERING HEIGHTS, and that ended as a disaster. I hired a writer named Meade Roberts, who had written the screenplay of THE STRIPPER, a film of which I had been associate producer at Fox. He seemed a very good writer; he had a great kind of classical background, but when he finally sent the pages it was just drivel. Absolute drivel. And so American International said, "We can't futz around with this project anymore. We'll get a British writer to do a quick draft, and we'll get a British director to direct it." I had a contract, so when WHO SLEW AUNTIE ROO? came up, I took it. It is true that Shelley said, "Well, I just did this film with Curtis; he would be ideal." They said, "Well, that would be ideal for us, too, because we have a contract

obligation with him." So the elements just fell into place.

SS: Did you make any script changes on AUNTIE ROO?

CH: Lots. Oh, yes, I had a lot to do with that script.

SS: Does working with children require an extra degree of patience?

CH: To a degree. But the wonderful thing about all those children in AUNTIE ROO is that they were all from some kind of professional

to think, at each moment, in each scene, he would come alive and something would happen. So that's what I had to do with him. Of course, if it took too long to light the setup he would forget and I'd have to go through it all again! (Laughs)

SS: Was Chloe Franks easier to direct?

CH: She was a natural little actress, and I remember she said the most amusing thing. In the scene with the teddy bear, when Shelley Winters gets

the idea that Chloe's the reincarnation of her daughter, she was supposed to say, "I had one just like it a long time ago." I was trying to get a certain line reading out of her, you know—to get that sort of mystical feeling that would be conveyed to Shelley, and Chloe looked at me and said, "How could it be a long time ago? I'm only six years old!" (Laughs)

SS: As for the adult actors, you had a few problems with Michael Gothard.

CH: Oh, yeah! He was a big pain in the ass!

SS: And how about Ralph Richardson?

CH: Adorable. Wonderful. He was great. It was a total joy to work with Ralph Richardson. I thought his interpretation of the part had echoes of W. C. Fields, and I loved it. With an actor of that stature, I'm not going to impose my view of how to play the role, you know? I was just thrilled with everything he did; I often tell people that he

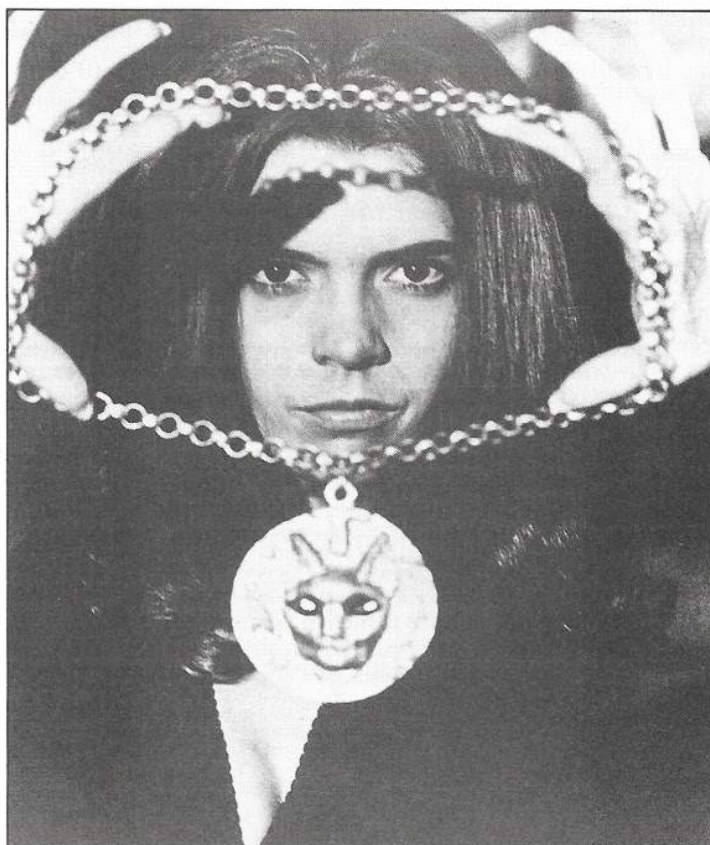
was so great that, when I was watching him play a scene, I didn't even know how much was going on—then I would see the dailies, and suddenly I'd see what was really happening.

SS: You also had Hugh Griffith.

CH: He was a terrible alcoholic, and his wife came on the set with him to hide all the bottles and keep him sober enough to do the scene. (Laughs) He, too, was just adorable. Wonderful old reprobate.

SS: There are certain similarities to NIGHT OF THE HUNTER in WHO SLEW AUNTIE ROO.

CH: There are, but I wasn't thinking about it at the time. Even though I had seen NIGHT OF THE HUNTER, and greatly admired it, I never thought of it once when we were making AUNTIE ROO.



Meredith Baxter was THE CAT CREATURE (1973) in a film directed by Curtis Harrington from a Robert Bloch script.

children's school in London. They really were wonderfully disciplined kids; I never had any problems with them. The person I had the problem with was the leading actor . . .

SS: Mark Lester?

CH: Mark Lester, yes. Mark was a very sweet boy, but a very ordinary boy. He'd been cast as Oliver Twist for his looks and he was suddenly a star; I think his parents were pushing him much too much. Mark really wasn't very good, but he had a wonderful quality and presence. He had a very short attention span, because he wasn't interested in acting; he wanted to be out playing football with the boys. You really had to tell him everything to do, but that wasn't enough, because he would do it mechanically. What I found out was that, if I literally told him everything





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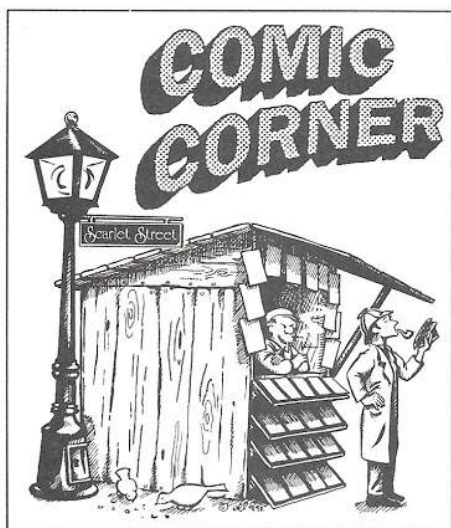
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### Bugged

Now Comics Company has been making huge promotional pitches for their Green Hornet series, which has chronicled the adventures of Hornet and Kato since 1989. In the past, the emerald-and-black duo (who came to TV Land in the 1960s in the persons of Van Williams and the late Bruce Lee) slugged it out with Nazis and Mafiosos. Now Hornet and Kato face such enemies as gun smugglers who sell automatic weapons to children.

Of course, we are not referring to retro-interpretations of our hero, such as that in the four-issue miniseries *Sting of the Green Hornet*. Scarlet Readers who appreciate old comics will love this series. Rather than poking fun at old comics and television and movie serials, *Sting of the Green Hornet* takes an affectionate and nostalgic look at a past era. The way the plot incorporates personalities (real and mythical) directly into the story is especially enjoyable. Read it and you'll know exactly what we mean.

Now Comics will also produce a comic spin-off of the upcoming Green Hornet film being optioned by Universal. Pick up a copy of the Green Hornet series or one of the many exciting miniseries titles offered by Now Comics. You will not be disappointed.

### Sparks Are Flying

Life used to be easier when Warren published comics. These days, you sometimes have to look hard to find good horror comics. Tuscan Press' *System Shock* is a 10-issue anthology of quality horror stories that seems to have picked up where Spider Baby Graphics' *Taboo* left off.

The comic is aimed at mature readers, and with good reason. The first issue is a grim, gritty look at the hor-

ror of the world around us. Check it out for its pulplike horror tales, but be forewarned: this comic book is recommended only for the strong of stomach.

### Gathering No Moss

Longing for Halloween? *The Upturned Stone* by Scott Hampton is the perfect companion for folks who remember how eerie Halloween can be. This is a murder mystery told in a traditional American-folklore style. Supernatural mischief and gloomy ghosts give this book a chilling and nightmarish quality. The campfire tale works because it is told through the eyes of a terrified young boy.

Keep your eyes peeled for other artwork and stories by Scott Hampton, who really knows how to create a mood with his eerie paintings.

### Marvel-ous Screen Savers

Have those "no way to save my screen" blues got you down? Well, if you use an IBM-compatible computer and you run Microsoft Windows, Marvel Comics has recently released the perfect screen saver for you, the comic-book aficionado. Screen savers prevent phosphor "burn-in" if you leave the computer running for long periods (i.e., all night). Windows already has screen savers, but they are relatively boring compared to what you can buy from After Dark and similar companies.

The Marvel Comics Screen Posters feature 35 vibrant pictures of Marvel's most popular characters: Spider-Man, the Hulk, the Fantastic Four, the Silver Surfer, and the X-Men. There are also historic covers and pages from *The Avengers*, *Daredevil*, and others; these can be programmed to appear on your screen when you switch on the computer. For about \$20, the Marvel Comics Screen Posters program from After Dark is a fun and affordable way to combine computers and comics. After Dark also makes screen savers featuring Disney and Star Trek characters.

### Wild Cards

Last issue we mentioned some non-sport trading cards (including the Topps Universal Monsters series pictured at right) being offered by such companies as Kitchen Sink Press. Since then, our Scarlet Mailbox has been overflowing with info regarding other exciting trading cards on the horizon.

Eclipse Comics is a small publisher making a name for itself

with its popular trading cards based on such movies as KING KONG and JAMES BOND. Each 110-card set features photos, rare preproduction drawings, and publicity photos. The back of each card has interesting information about the making of the original films.

For those who ran out to pick up the cards mentioned last issue, Kitchen Sink is still busy producing unique card sets. Unlike many card companies, Kitchen Sink takes the headache out of card collecting by selling complete boxed sets. This is an added convenience for those buying such sets as *Bizarre Detective: 36 Lurid Pulp Covers from the 1930s* and *Chicago Mob Wars: Al Capone vs. Eliot Ness*. Though both sets are of typical Kitchen Sink high quality, *Bizarre Detective* is a real stand-out because of its remarkably vibrant and titillating images. This set presents some of the sexiest covers from such magazines as *Spicy Mystery Stories*, *Dime Detective Magazine*, and *True Gangster Stories*.

This year, also look for the revival of the unforgettable *Mars Attacks* cards. After more than 20 years, Topps is reviving the series with the *Mars Attacks 1994* set, featuring both reprints of the original cards and new cards. The artwork for these cards has a truly classic-1950s "space" feel. Also keep your eyes peeled for *Flintstone Movie Photo Cards* by Topps and *Batman: Saga of the Dark Knight Trading Cards* from SkyBox.

—Buddy Scalera



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# Third Time's the Charm? Will Robin Make It into BATMAN III?

by Buddy Scalera and  
Kevin G. Shinnick

advertisement that appeared in newspapers in New York and the surrounding area.

In the biting cold of January, determined Robin hopefuls braved the cold with dreams that next year they might be scaling a Gotham City building side by side with the Dark Knight. Some were experienced actors. Others had "the look" or at least "a look". Some came and stood on line, well, because they saw other people standing on line. (It's probably just a New York thing, we guess.)

While some hammed it up for the *Scarlet Street* photographer, others practiced their streetwise, tough-guy look—a look, incidentally, that could land any number of them parts as extras or even leading roles. "They asked for someone who was streetwise, sexy, young; nationality didn't matter. And I think this is a time for ethnicity," explained hopeful Aubrey Lynch. "I'm a young black man and I think it would be very innovative and very 90s to cast a young black guy in the role of Robin."

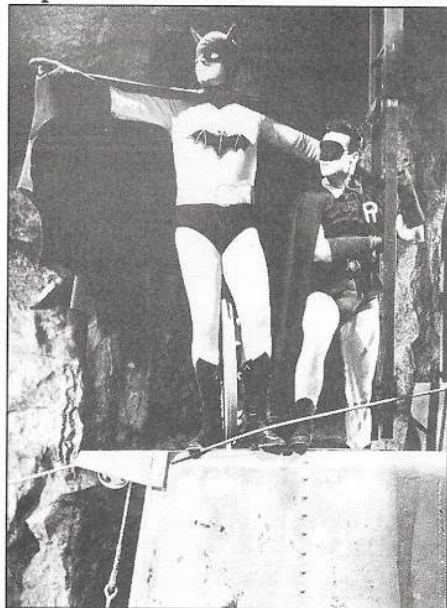
Why not? Through the years, Batman has had as many as five Robins, one a young woman. There were only a few women waiting to audition, but the rest of the people on line (estimated at over 1000) were as diverse as the city itself. Old and young stood in the cold and rain on a line that at times wrapped around the street corner.

**WANTED:** Tough street-wise kid to play opposite Michael Keaton in BATMAN III. Any takers?

It was cold. Really cold. But there was no shortage of hot actors, male and female, aged 15 to 30, on line hoping to be discovered for the role of Robin the Boy (Girl?) Wonder for the upcoming BATMAN III, due in Summer 1995.

More than 200 hopefuls from the Metropolitan area turned out on January 15, 1994, responding to a classified

**ABOVE:** Classic Batman and Robin from the 1940s comics. **BELOW LEFT:** Robert Lowry and John Duncan as the Caped Crusaders in 1949's BATMAN AND ROBIN. **BELOW RIGHT:** Robin on BATMAN: THE ANIMATED SERIES.





**RIGHT:** It was a cold, wintry day in Gotham City—better known as Manhattan—when an open casting call went out for a young actor to play the role of Robin the Boy Wonder in *BATMAN III*, but that didn't keep a record crowd from showing up. The new film pits the Dynamic Duo against the clever conundrums of The Riddler, who will most likely be played by Robin Williams—without a dress.

The buzz was that the casting director was looking to fill the role of Dick Grayson, the first and most famous Robin, who first swung onto the scene in April 1940. (Dick and his parents were a circus act called the Flying Graysons. When Mom and Pop were murdered, Bruce Wayne took Dick under his batwing.) Security was tight for the media, but a member of the casting crew indicated that Warner Bros. was not necessarily looking for a Burt Ward look-alike.

This was not the first Batman flick slated to feature the bird boy. *BATMAN* (1989) originally concluded with the Flying Graysons making an appearance on a float in The Joker's parade. The original script for *BATMAN II* (retitled *BATMAN RETURNS* and released in 1992) also called for the appearance of Dick Grayson, in this incarnation a teenage street urchin who latches onto the Batman after saving the life of news photographer Vicki Vale.

"Marlon Wayans was originally set for the role," claimed David Purves. "That's about as off-casting as you can get, which is fine, but I'm looking down the aisle and, frankly, of the hundreds of people here, there's only a half dozen that really fit the image that's being portrayed from the animated TV series and the current comic books. Of course, nobody expected Michael Keaton to play Batman, so . . ."

William Jesse Vazquez, one of the few actors who received a callback, hoped that they would not actually use Dick Grayson, "because he was always getting captured by the enemy and Batman had to save him. I'm hoping they use the newest Robin, Tim Drake. He's a high-school student; he has friends."

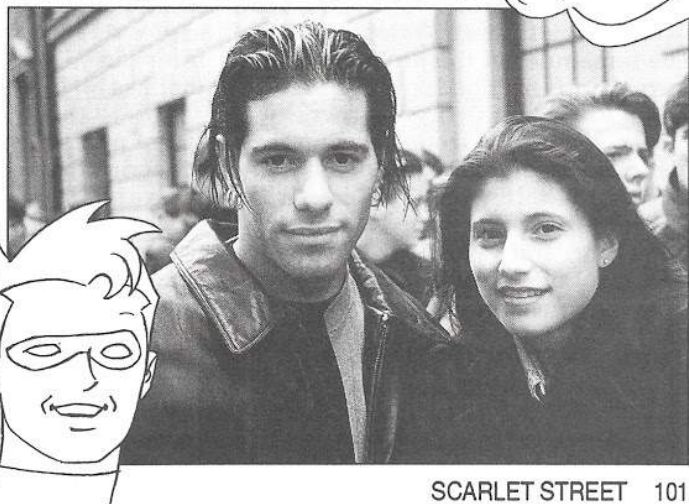
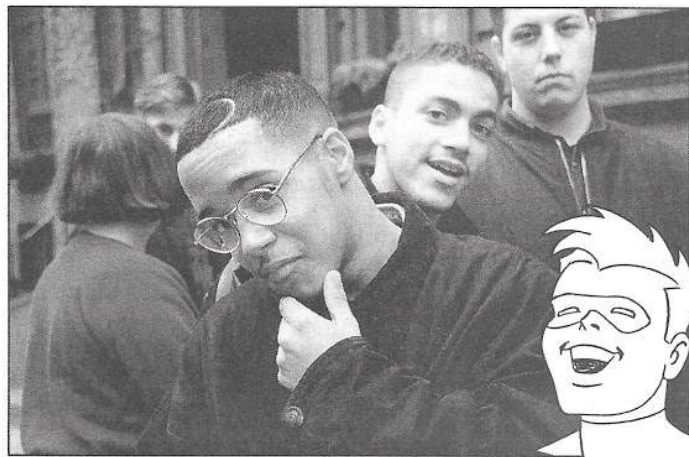
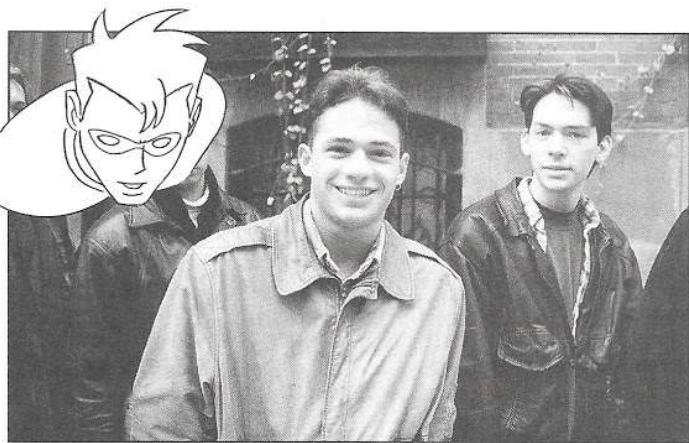
Most of the actors tried to anticipate what the casting director was looking for in Robin. "I'll act like a bird," joked Christian Murawski. "A mean bird. A bird of prey."

Others hadn't prepared at all. Asked what he planned to perform for the audition, Ikenna Obasi answered candidly, "I don't know. I didn't even know it was for Robin. I just came."

Still others came as acting teams—one a father/son team, another a mother/son team. Judy Hesig hoped that her son, Michael, would be the next Robin. And Judy herself? "I want to try out for Alfred's love interest in *BATMAN IV*," she said with a laugh.

Odds have it that most actors who attend an open call will go home disappointed. The few who got callbacks were instructed to go to the Parker Meridian Hotel later in the week. Cin Dee Hathaway was one of the many not accepted. Her attitude was not one of rejection, but rather that the casting director missed an opportunity. "I think it would be so much fun. They kind of looked at me funny when I said, 'Can I have an application?' But they gave me one! People are looking for a man or a small boy, but I think a girl could do a good job. They need someone little, too, next to Michael Keaton. Can't have a big guy!"

Who can question the desire to dress up in superhero drag? After all, a large part of the superhero biz is the outfit. "I like the new costume," admitted Buddy Arcund, "with the boots and the tights."



Artwork © 1992 Warner Bros. All rights reserved. Photos by Buddy Scalera and Kevin G. Shinnick



# Book Ends

## The Scarlet Street Review of Books

### THE WOLF MAN: THE ORIGINAL 1941 SHOOTING SCRIPT

Curt Siodmak

Edited by Philip J. Riley

MagicImage Filmbooks, 1993

262 pages—\$19.95

What has come to be regarded as Universal's classiest, if not best, horror film of the 1940s has become the 12th in MagicImage's line of original shooting scripts. As might be construed from its hefty page count, *THE WOLF MAN* has been given a treatment so thorough that very few questions about its creation remain unanswered. A foreword by the late Evelyn Ankers (written in 1974) provides a glimpse of some on-the-set mishaps, as well as her professional and personal opinions of the rough-edged Lon Chaney, Jr. Scenarist Curt Siodmak elaborates on the allure of Greek tragedy, which became the philosophical basis upon which his screenplay was created. We are shown script development as story elements are added and the title character's name changes from Don Hill to Larry Gill to . . .

Douglas Norwine provides the most in-depth look yet at makeup wizard Jack P. Pierce, followed by a reprint of a 1932 article from *American Cinematographer*. Some tantalizing new info is shared by director of photography Joseph Valentine, A.S.C., and production designer Robert Boyle, the man responsible for the familiar fog-shrouded woods and much of the nuts and bolts scenery design usually credited to art director Jack Otterson. (Both men are listed in the film's opening credits.) The remainder of the production information is ascribed to Greg Mank, Philip Riley, and George Turner.

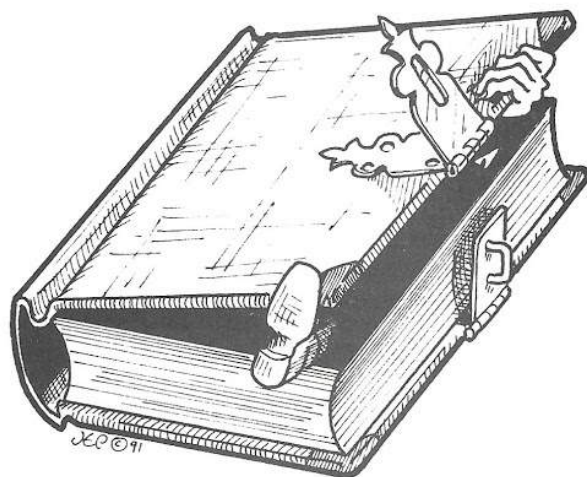
Riley includes a section tracing the werewolf legend back to its roots in Greek mythology, noting its first appearances in English history and literature, and even reproducing a transcript of a 1590 Dutch werewolf trial! The piece follows through to the initial mention of the subject in the cinema (Bison's 1914 *THE WEREWOLF*), and concludes with Universal's unused 1932 Robert Florey treatment for *THE WOLF MAN*.

For devotees of the film's music, there is a delightful in-depth analysis of the *WOLF MAN* score, a collaboration by the studio's three major music men: Hans J. Salter, Frank Skinner, and Charles Previn. Detailed, interpreted, and appreciated by concert composer Joseph Marcello, no aspect of the creation of this milestone music is ignored. His descriptions of passages such as "The Kill", familiar to anyone who has seen a Universal 1940s horror film, are eloquent beyond words. Some reproduction of musical cues have been provided in past MagicImage entries, but almost every major motif written for the film is set down in this volume.

Siodmak's original screenplay of October 9th, 1941, predates the familiar story and has a slew of different plot elements. Larry Talbot (Lon Chaney) is Larry Gill, an American hired by Sir John Talbot (Claude Rains) to install a telescope. Frank Andrews (Patric Knowles) is much more central to the story, as is Reverend Norman (Harry Stubbs). Other names have not yet reached their final form, including Inspector Kendall, who becomes Colonel Paul Montford (Ralph Bellamy), and Mr. Cotton, Kendall's queasy assistant, who ends up as Mr. Twiddle (Forrester Harvey). The infamous bear-wrestling sequence, cut from the film, is still present in this draft, and it is easy to see why it was better left on the shelf. As presented here, it serves only to draw sympathy away from Larry, as he torments an animal that has no interest in fighting.

Add to this the candid and posed stills, pressbook, publicity, continuity script for the film's trailer, cast biographies, and a look at the career of producer/director George Waggner (responsible for the first-class treatment of the picture) and you have another must for your MagicImage book-shelf—placed, I suggest, between *GHOST OF FRANKENSTEIN* and *FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN*.

—Richard Scrivani



### GIANT MONSTER MOVIES

Robert Marrero

Fantasma Books, 1994

254 pages—\$17.95

Many of us have a secret yen for those often corny giant-monster flicks in which some oversized beast lays waste to Tokyo (or London, or New York—wherever the big buggers decide to visit). I myself have been a big fan of *Godzilla* since I was a wee lad, and I must admit that this interest in the Big Green Lizard is just as strong and healthy today.

So imagine my pleasure when I was handed a copy of *Giant Monster Movies* to review. In addition to a sizable, detailed section on *Godzilla*, author Robert Marrero also looks at other over-sized menaces, such as Ray Harryhausen's octopus from *IT CAME FROM BENEATH THE SEA* (1955), the giant ants from *THEM* (1954), and the great ape himself, *KING KONG* (1933), among others.

What makes *Giant Monster Movies* even more enjoyable is its lack of pretension. Marrero realizes that a lot of these films weren't exactly fine art, but his love and enthusiasm for them still shows. Reading his book, which is filled with excellent, eye-popping photos, one can understand why so many people find such movies entertaining.

However, the book is not without its serious side. Devoting Chapter One to "The Silent Giants", Marrero examines the very first films to feature oversized monsters, including *THE GIGANTIC DEVIL* (1902), whose towering devil is considered by the author to be the first "true" movie giant. Of course, no chapter detailing the early history of movie monsters would be complete without a section on Willis O'Brien, the man who re-



finest stop-motion animation and who was a mentor to the legendary Ray Harryhausen.

O'Brien's entire career is amply explored here, with Marrero giving a detailed biography of his early days and films. But the film that O'Brien was best known for, the original KING KONG (1933), has its very own chapter. Marrero not only gives an in-depth look at this masterpiece, but he also examines such films as SON OF KONG (1933), the quickly-made sequel, and MIGHTY JOE YOUNG (1949). The flawed Dino DeLaurentiis remake of KING KONG (1976), as well as its awful sequel, KING KONG LIVES (1986), are also included in the KING KONG chapter. Marrero has also tracked down virtually every rip-off and Japanese remake of KING KONG and presents them here, with his criticism. There is also a thoroughly researched chapter on dinosaur films, as well as a complete filmography at the end of the book.

*Giant Monster Movies* tries to be the definitive film book of its kind, and it succeeds—largely.

—Sean Farrell

## THE OXFORD SHERLOCK HOLMES

Owen Dudley Edwards, General Editor  
Oxford University Press, 1993  
Boxed set (9 books) \$99.00  
Also available individually

In these dark, dismal days of mass marketing, trade paperbacks, and the like, fewer and fewer readers concern themselves overmuch with the style and workmanship of the volumes they purchase. For those who still do, however, there is now *The Oxford Sherlock Holmes*, a nifty nine-volume presentation of the entire Canon by Arthur Conan Doyle.

Each lavish, hardcover volume is annotated and comes complete with a preface to the entire series, an introduction to the text at hand (by such Sherlockian scholars as Richard Lancelyn Green, Christopher Roden, W. W. Robson, and general editor Owen Dudley Edwards), a note on the text, a select bibliography, and a chronology of Conan Doyle.

The books are wondrously stylish, the notes perceptive without being stuffy (if a trifle obsessed with comparisons between Holmes and Wat-

son and Jeeves and Wooster), and the introductions, particularly those by Richard Lancelyn Green for *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes* and *The Return of Sherlock Holmes*, entertaining and enlightening.

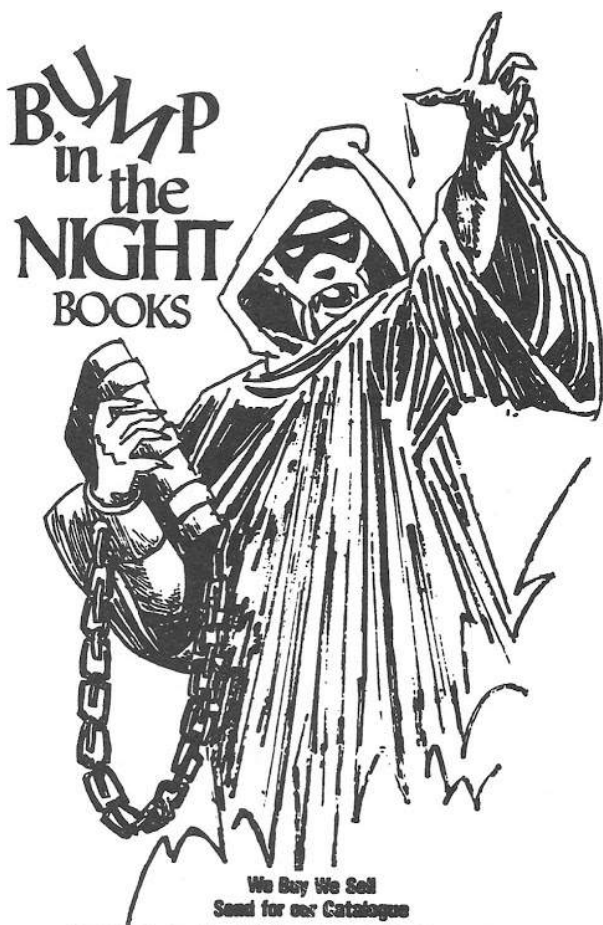
The volumes in *The Oxford Sherlock Holmes* can be purchased individually—but, as with those potato chips Bert Lahr used to munch, it will be impossible to stop at one. Buy the whole set and—you'll pardon the expression—go stuff yourself.

—Drew Sullivan

## MEMOIRS OF A PROFESSIONAL CAD

George Sanders  
Scarecrow Press, 1992  
283 pages—\$35.00

In *Memoirs of A Professional Cad*, George Sanders (1906–1972) offers Hollywood gossip and reflections on acting for those craven souls who prefer a good villain to a good hero. For the new Scarecrow edition, film historian Tony Thomas provides more and better photographs than were found in the 1960 original and adds a biographical introduction, a



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filmography and an epilogue about the last 12 years of Sanders's life, after he wrote his *Memoirs*.

Sanders, hero of *VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED*, made more than 100 films. He starred in the original Saint and Falcon film series, but was usually typecast as a debonair villain. His most memorable roles included odious Jack Favell in Alfred Hitchcock's *REBECCA* (1940); Lord Henry Wotton, the Svengali of *THE PICTURE OF DORIAN GRAY* (1945); Miles Fairley, the "perfumed parlor snake" of *THE GHOST AND MRS. MUIR* (1947); and savage critic Addison DeWitt in *ALL ABOUT EVE* (1950), for which he won a Best Supporting Actor Oscar. "My nastiness . . . was of a novel kind," he writes. "I was beastly but I was never coarse. I was a high-class sort of heel."

Born in 1906 in St. Petersburg, Russia, Sanders and his family escaped to England in 1917. After breaking into films in 1936, he soon moved to Hollywood. He spoke fluent Russian, German, French, and Spanish, and was an excellent pianist and bass-baritone. As an inventor, he owned several patents. However, he earned his living as an actor.

"I had had since the beginning a profound sense of unreality about my newly acquired profession," he wrote. "I never really thought I would make the grade. And let's face it, I haven't . . . When I began my career in films I found it rather frustrating not to be cast in romantic parts." However, "the mortality rate among stars is extremely high, whereas a good character actor is almost indestructible. Even with one foot in the grave it is possible for such an actor to go on earning a good living, since there seem to be a large number of parts written which require the actor to look half dead: and in fact these circumstances may lend a verisimilitude to his performance when his acting never could."

Sanders wrote little about his films. He claimed he couldn't remember most of them. Though he was rarely out of work, Hollywood had mixed feelings about this intelligent, sharp-tongued man and his witty rants about women and others he considered inferior. Even his friends couldn't tell when he was serious. For example, when Nigel Bruce asked him why he failed to join in the patriotic efforts of other British actors during World War II, Sanders replied coolly, "Because I'm a shit."

In 1949, Sanders married Zsa Zsa Gabor. Following years of theatrical

fight and mutual infidelity, they divorced in 1954, but remained close friends. "Zsa Zsa was like champagne," he writes, "and I as her husband was hard put to it to keep up with her standard of effervescence." Benita Hume Colman, widow of actor Ronald Colman, married Sanders in 1959. Despite predictions of doom from her friends, the marriage made them both happy.

A desire to quit acting, become a tycoon, and find a tax shelter led Sanders to bankroll Husan, a phonograph record manufacturing business, which failed in 1956. In 1961, Sanders became codirector and chief investor in CADCO, Ltd., a wild international business scheme. With both his partners in prison, Sanders declared bankruptcy in 1966.

Then Benita died, slowly and painfully of cancer, in 1967. He married Magda Gabor, Zsa Zsa's older sister, in 1970, but got the marriage annulled a few weeks later. (She had suffered a massive stroke in 1966 and seems not to have understood clearly what was happening.) Sanders's own health deteriorated, ominously, with a series of minor strokes. Partially deaf and sometimes forced to use a cane, he began losing roles because of vertigo.

In 1972, he checked into a lonely hotel near Barcelona, where he killed himself with a mixture of vodka and Nembutal. A note in Spanish directed authorities to inform his sister. A second note, addressed "Dear World," said, "I am leaving because I am bored. I feel I have lived long enough. I am leaving you with your worries in this sweet cesspool—good luck."

Whatever the truth about his character, George Sanders was a complicated, fascinating person. His fans won't want to miss this new edition of his *Memoirs*.

—Lelia Loban

#### ONCE AROUND THE BLOCH

Robert Bloch

Tor, 1993

416 pages—\$22.95

He's "The Man Who Wrote *Psycho*." And even though Robert Bloch has written dozens of movie and television scripts, a spate of novels and short stories beyond number, the appellation remains fixed on his calling card. Like most prolific artists inexorably identified with a single work, Bloch regards his most inspired creation with mixed feelings (just as Orson Welles cringed at the mention

of *CITIZEN KANE* and David O. Selznick eternally reproached himself for his inability to top *GONE WITH THE WIND*). Bloch's newly published "unauthorized autobiography" isn't likely to top *Psycho* (it may not even top his script for *STRAIT-JACKET*), but he relates his life story with dollops of charm and great good humor.

A child of the Depression, Bloch found his economic prospects glum even after embarking on a writing career as a teenager. Grinding out penny-a-word stories for horror pulp magazines assured him a mundane, rather unworldly existence, and for years he rarely strayed beyond his drab Middle American environs. Although he carved a reputation for himself among a clique of hardcore horror devotees, Bloch was forced to moonlight at an advertising agency and briefly attained local notoriety after successfully helming a campaign to get a dark horse political hack elected mayor of Milwaukee.

This isn't the stuff of great biography, but Bloch can spin a funny line with the best of 'em. A wordsmith *par excellence*, he skillfully transforms something as commonplace as a boyhood fishing trip into a jaunty saga rich with incident and wryly humorous observations. But his later chapters, in which the writer forsakes Wisconsin for Hollywood, need no apologies. Alfred Hitchcock's gamble, adapting Bloch's novel, *Psycho*, into a low-budget black-and-white shocker, was a grand slam that altered the course of horror movies—as well as the career of the British director—forever. Bloch's fortunes likewise took off, and his memories of his mid-life fame are checkered with the names of the legendary movie folk he met along the way. Boris Karloff, Buster Keaton, and Joan Crawford are among the lineup of luminaries, but it's especially nice to see that such rarely chronicled B movie notables as Onslow Stevens, Dick Foran, and Rochelle Hudson have snuck in as well.

As it turns out, the writer whose imagination sired the twisted mind of Norman Bates seems to possess a conspicuously untwisted one himself. Whether using it to cultivate a correspondence with his idol and mentor, H. P. Lovecraft, or merely penning a screenplay for William Castle, it soon becomes apparent that this self-effacing man never really stopped being a fan himself.

But modesty, too, has its drawbacks. Few, if any, works are discussed except fleetingly, and the



writer's aversion to self-analysis precludes any explanation of why he was drawn to the macabre in the first place. The reader is forced to accept at face value claims of his initial encounters with Lon Chaney's *THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA* and with *Weird Tales* magazine as defining moments in Bloch's life. Happily, the wit found in the book's title comes across on every page—to say nothing of the author's immense likability.

—Michael Brunas

#### THE BOXTREE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF TV DETECTIVES

Geoff Tibballs

London: Boxtree Ltd., 1992

458 pages—£17.99 (paperback)

THE BOXTREE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF TV DETECTIVES covers "every major (and most of the minor) detective series . . . on British and American TV since the war; a total of around 500—many wonderful, some downright woeful". The listing is alphabetical, but readers who can't remember the official title of a series may have to do some sleuthing, because there's no index and little cross-referencing.

Trivia hunters will love this book. A few examples: In the original *PERRY MASON* series (1957–1967),

when actor Raymond Burr called in sick, Bette Davis (in the role of a lawyer friend of Perry's) won a case for him. Steven Spielberg directed the first episode of *COLUMBO* (September 15, 1971). Mary Tyler Moore "got her big break", but "only from the waist down", as Sam, a leggy secretary on *RICHARD DIAMOND, PRIVATE DETECTIVE* (1957–1960). Mike (then known as Myron) Wallace played Lieutenant Kidd on *STAND BY FOR CRIME* in 1949!

American readers will enjoy glimpses of British programs not known here, such as *DIXON OF DOCK GREEN*, about a genial London bobby (1955–1976), and *Z-CARS* (667 episodes, 1962–1978). Trevor Eve starred in *SHOESTRING* (1979–1980), which Tibballs calls "one of the best-ever British private eye series". Its creator, Robert Banks Stewart, later made *BERGERAC* (1981–1991), starring John Nettles and Louise Jameson (Leela of *DR. WHO*) and set in the Channel Islands. *EUROCOPS* (1988–1991) "showed that crime on the continent can be just as gruesome as in Britain and with one additional deadly menace—subtitles". As Tibballs says of *TAGGART* (1983–1991), starring Mark McManus, "America, you don't know what you're missing".

Tibballs follows the encyclopedia with brief "Detective Notes" in eight categories. "Ten Detectives I Wouldn't Want to Meet in A Dark Alley" specifies Frank Cannon in a narrow alley. "The Ten Best-Dressed Detectives" begin with Maddie Hayes. *Columbo* heads a lineup of "The Ten Worst-Dressed Detectives". The book ends with a short chronology of major detective-show landmarks.

Any encyclopedia of this scope will raise quibbles. For instance, in his section on the Granada *SHERLOCK HOLMES* series, Tibballs refers to "the beautiful but deadly Irene Adler". However, the woman of "A Scandal in Bohemia" is not the villainess or murderess that the word "deadly" implies. Sometimes Tibballs is self-consciously cute, as when he calls *CHARLIE'S ANGELS* "the show that did for women's lib what myxomatosis did for the rabbit". He occasionally uses ethnic epithets such as "Red Indian" and "Chinamen". Finally, stronger binding, opaque paper, and an index would improve this book.

Nevertheless, *The Boxtree Encyclopedia of TV Detectives* is a valuable and entertaining reference work. Read and enjoy. "And hey—let's be careful out there."

—Lelia Loban

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## THE STRANGLER

Continued from page 45

Again, however, you have to keep going back to Victor Buono as Leo Kroll. Though his career was busy, he was of a type that was difficult to cast, usually ending up playing routine heavies in such movies as *ROBIN AND THE SEVEN HOODS* (1964) and *THE SILENCERS* (1966). Except for a splendid cameo as Bette Davis' redneck dad in Aldrich's 1964 *BABY JANE* follow-up, *HUSH... HUSH*, *SWEET CHARLOTTE*, his movie career was a promise never quite fulfilled, and he eventually drifted into television and "guest villain" appearances on *BATMAN*. Taking on even more weight, he was reduced to playing the jolly fat man when his knack for writing funny limericks was discovered by television talk show hosts in the 70s. A familiar figure on the Johnny Carson, Merv Griffin, and Mike Douglas shows, Buono sandwiched his tales of working with Davis and Crawford between jocular rhymes celebrating his own corpulence. Ironically, it was that very corpulence that cut short his life. He died on New Year's Day, 1982, one month before his 44th birthday.

Buono never became "The New Laird Cregar", but, as unfair as such comparisons are, they're also hard to resist. Both men died young, victims of their own excesses. However, Cregar died while his early promise was being realized, whereas Buono seemed hopelessly stalled in a mire of made-for-TV mediocrity and undistinguished "guest shots". His first few film appearances proved him to be a resourceful actor and an interesting, offbeat personality, only a glimmer of which was visible in later roles.

Buono's legacy may not be as rich as Cregar's, nor is *THE STRANGLER* likely to dim the memory of *THE LODGER*. Still, it is a solid example of 'B' moviemaking



© 1963 Allied Artists Pictures Corporation

Victor Buono (pictured with Mimi Dillard in 1964's *THE STRANGLER*) was hailed as "The New Laird Cregar" after making a splash in 1962's *WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO BABY JANE?*, but Cregar, suffering from a weight problem, died young—and so did Buono.

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Joan Crawford accepts her Oscar™

## MILDRED PIERCE

*Continued from page 50*

did Monty in because he spurned her marriage proposal. The damnable daughter quickly dismisses her mother's outpouring of guilt and grief, and is led to the lockup, callous to the very end.

The final scene is another instance of Haller's genius. With scrubwomen laboring on their knees in the foreground, perhaps washing away remnants of this evil night, the innocent exit the station through a towering arch into the soft light of a breaking dawn.

\*\*\*

Joan Crawford is Mildred Pierce. She pulls the other characters along with her, and the viewer cares about them only because they are affecting "our" Mildred. She is the earth mother. We love her; we weep with her; we are seduced by her; we long to take her to our bosom. We instantly forgive her for real or imagined wrong-doings, because she represents both the strivings and the weaknesses in all of us.

Crawford's performance is as stirring, as real today, as it was in 1945, and remains one of the outstanding screen portrayals by an actress of any era; but Crawford must share the well-earned laurels for MILDRED PIERCE with her cameraman: More than any other, Ernest Haller created the look and the mood of MILDRED PIERCE. His work on the film would later be hailed as the forerunner of Warner Brothers' film noir period. Although the European influence of low key lighting and unusual camera angles had already been used (1940'S THE LETTER, 1941'S THE MALTESE FALCON and HIGH SIERRA), it was Haller's work in MILDRED PIERCE that drew the most praise from critics and enthusiasts alike.

Joan Crawford, herself well-known for her generosity to technical crews, was perhaps the first and most magnanimous in giving the master lensman his due: "I recall

## MILDRED PIERCE

### Credits

Sept. 1945. Warner Brothers First National. Producer: Jerry Wald. Screenplay: Ransald MacDougall. Based on the novel by James M. Cain. Camera: Ernest Haller. Art Director: Anton Grot. Editor: David Weisbart. Music: Max Steiner. Running time: 109 minutes.

### Cast

Joan Crawford (Mildred Pierce); Jack Carson (Wally Faye); Zachary Scott (Monty Beragon); Ann Blyth (Veda Pierce); Bruce Bennett (Bert Pierce); Eve Arden (Ida Corbett); Jo Ann Marlowe (Kay Pierce); George Tobias (Mr. Chris); Lee Patrick (Maggie Binderhoff); Moroni Olsen (Inspector Peterson); Barbara Brown (Mrs. Forrester) Charles Trowbridge (Mr. Williams) John Compton (Ted Forrester); Butterfly McQueen (Lottie); Garry Owen (Policeman on Pier); Clancy Cooper, Tom Dillon (Policemen); James Flavin, Jack O'Connor (Two Detectives); Charles Jordan (Policeman); Charles Robert Arthur (High School Boy); Joyce Compton, Lynne Baggett (Waitresses); Ramsay Ames (Party Guest); Leah Baird (Police Matron); John Christian (Singing Teacher); Joan Winfield (Piano Teacher); Jimmy Lono (Houseboy); Mary Sevross (Nurse); Manart Kippen (Dr. Gals); David Cota (Pancho); Chester Clute (Mr. Jones); Wallis Clark (Wally's Lawyer)

seeing Ernie's copy of the script," she remembers, "and it was filled with notations and dialogue. I asked him if these were for special lights, and he said, 'No, they're for special shadows . . . .' When I saw the rushes of MILDRED PIERCE, I realized what Ernie was doing . . . . The shadows and half-lights, the way the sets were lit, together with the unusual angles of the camera added considerably to the psychology of my character, and to the mood and psychology of the film . . . . And that, my dear, is film noir."

A fitting postscript to a treatise on MILDRED PIERCE should include revisiting the evening when Crawford won that now-high-priced Oscar. Joan chose to spend the evening at home—depending on who is telling the story, either in bed with a bad case of the flu or in the throes of a panic attack at the very thought of ending the evening empty-handed. In either case, it is widely reported that she was medicating herself for whatever ailed her with ample amounts of Jack Daniels.

"I listened to the Oscar broadcast from Grauman's," the star revealed. "I can compete with a servant girl [Greer Garson in VALLEY OF DECISION], with a tramp [Gene Tierney in LEAVE HER TO HEAVEN], an amnesiac [Jennifer Jones in LOVE LETTERS], but not with a nun [Ingrid Bergman in THE BELLS OF ST. MARY'S]!" Crawford was convinced that Bergman would win, but just in case the fates blessed her, she dressed herself in a Helen Rose nightie and had her hairdresser and makeup man at the ready in the next room.

When Charles Boyer announced the winner for Best Actress, "Joan Crawford!", the actress, looking perfection, flew to the door to receive the accolades of her fans and the adoring newsmen who had camped out on her front lawn.

MILDRED PIERCE is a movie that can be appreciated on many levels: as a murder mystery, a gem of film noir, a showcase for a legend of the silver screen. Perhaps, though, its place in film history should be the part it played in a most unique Hollywood story—a star is born; a star dims and almost disappears from the firmament; a star, a great star, is born again!







**LEFT:** Ann Blyth starred opposite Paul Newman in *THE HELEN MORGAN STORY* (1957), but her voice was dubbed by Gogi Grant. **RIGHT:** Ann Blyth and Vic Damone were "Strangers in Paradise" in 1955's *KISMET*.

## ANN BLYTH

*Continued from page 54*

I don't know all the details about why they chose to recast, but I was given about four days' notice that I was going off to London to do a movie with Tyrone Power. And the first thing that came to my mind was the one and only time I ever played hooky in New York, when I left school to go see Tyrone Power in a movie. (Laughs) Here I was going off to London to be in a movie *with* him! He was just a lovely man. Not only lovely to look at, but lovely to be around.

**SS:** *We'd be remiss if we didn't ask you about your MGM musicals. What was it like at the MGM musical unit?*

**AB:** I consider myself very lucky, because I not only did some musicals, I did a few other movies as well. Certainly, the musicals were memorable for many reasons. When you think of the people who were available to help you along the way—not only wonderful designers, but choreographers, the best of musicians . . .

**SS:** *Have you a favorite musical?*

**AB:** Oh, I liked doing *KISMET*. The music is so wonderful in that. It didn't turn out the way we would have wished it to. I don't know whether the concentration wasn't there from the producing end of it, but musically it turned out well.

**SS:** *Rumor has it that Vincente Minnelli didn't want to direct it.*

**AB:** Well, maybe that's the quality that isn't there. As with anything, if your heart isn't in something, it's difficult to put forth the kind of effort that it takes to make magic happen.

**SS:** *Did he appear disinterested while you were filming?*

**AB:** He did to me. He was a very sweet man, and had done some wonderful musicals, so we all were looking forward to a good experience. Not that it was not a nice experience—but when the results aren't what you hope they'd be, it is disappointing.

**SS:** *Mario Lanza dropped out of THE STUDENT PRINCE.*

**AB:** I still don't know all of the reasons for his not doing the movie. We had already done the recording. I just know that the studio, after much waiting around, hoping that he would change his mind and come back and do the movie, decided to go ahead without him. I think that might have been the beginning of his depression, his erratic behavior—that he realized that he wasn't going to be able to tell a studio what he was going to do. Unfortunately, he made some other bad decisions. He was not a very disciplined man; consequently, his career just plummeted.

**SS:** *Even though he didn't make the film, you spent time together recording the soundtrack.*

**AB:** I found him, as I said, a most undisciplined person, and volatile—but when we worked together, he behaved himself. (Laughs) I've heard stories about other leading ladies who had a terrible time with him, and I always say that maybe he had heard that I was Irish and the Irish are known to have a bit of a temper—and that he'd better not try anything. (Laughs) I remember, when I was very young, my mother would be asked certain things about me and

what I'd be able to do, and she was quite feisty. She was tiny, but she was mighty. (Laughs) And I think I garnered some of that from her. I'm glad I did.

**SS:** *Why did you stop making films after starring in THE HELEN MORGAN STORY in 1957?*

**AB:** Well, the parts just weren't there, and the ones that were weren't very interesting. I had already thought about going back to doing theater. It just seemed a very natural thing for me to do.

**SS:** *You've got such a lovely voice. Why did they dub it with Gogi Grant's in THE HELEN MORGAN STORY?*

**AB:** Well, at that time, Gogi was a top recording artist, and the studio just had an idea that that's the sound they wanted to hear when Helen Morgan opened her mouth. Of course, Helen Morgan didn't have that kind of a voice. I was able to get some old recordings of hers so that I could study her voice a bit; at the time, early on in the project, I didn't know that I wasn't going to be doing the singing. She had a very small voice, actually. If anything, it was more a soprano than a pop singing voice. I thought Gogi did a terrific job; it just wasn't Helen Morgan's voice, or anywhere near her voice.

**SS:** *A final question: Do you miss your movie-making days?*

**AB:** Oh, I don't think so. I've never really thought about it. (Laughs) Making movies was and is wonderful—but if the right parts don't come along, then you do other things.







When Barbara Shelley fled the *VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED* (1960), she went on to a career in such celebrated genre films as *DRACULA—PRINCE OF DARKNESS* (1966), *THE GORGON* (1964), and *FIVE MILLION YEARS TO EARTH* (1968). Young Martin Stephens made *THE INNOCENTS* (1961), one of the screen's classic ghost stories, but gave up acting shortly after becoming *THE DEVIL'S OWN* (1966) for Hammer.

## BARBARA SHELLEY

*Continued from page 82*

like to go to India?" I said, "You're on!" (Laughs)

**SS:** *In recent years, you've been concentrating on theater and television.*

**BS:** Yes, I finally got to do Royal Shakespeare Company in '75. They originally said they'd be embarrassed to audition me. I told them I didn't want to embarrass them, I wanted to surprise them—because I knew what their attitude was. I did surprise them and I got in.

**SS:** *What would you consider your finest moment on stage?*

**BS:** I think it came when I was at school and played the chancellor in *IOLANTHE*, and when I was in a youth thing and we won a national

competition for a play called *THE QUEEN'S RING*. I played Queen Elizabeth. Do you mean what have I enjoyed most?

**SS:** *What would you consider your best work?*

**BS:** Well, I'm a great perfectionist. I think I've yet to do my best work. In a funny way, becoming known is a horror. I don't think that I have been able in my professional career to do my best work. I think that is the reason that I have not been offered the roles that I could have done. I've enjoyed 'most any work I've done on the stage. There's something spiritually fulfilling in entertaining a theater full of people.

**SS:** *We've thoroughly enjoyed your film work, too.*

**BS:** Well, that's very nice to hear. You know, it's strange; I haven't worked much in the last three or four years, but every now and again someone will come up to me in the street or in

a shop and say, "Why don't we see you on television?" I always say, "Well, you get the television you deserve. Nobody writes parts for me." The last thing I did was a *MAIGRET* story, with Richard Harris playing Maigret. Then there was a television show called *DARK ANGEL*. It was based on *Uncle Silas*, with Peter O'Toole playing Uncle Silas. That was the last thing I did, and that was two years ago. I haven't had the right manager in quite a few years. Also, I was busy looking after my mother; there were family problems in the middle of the 80s. I have a career, now, in interior designing and things like that. I quite enjoy that. Every now and again I miss acting, because I see something on the television and I think, "Well, I could have done that one." So perhaps, as I said, my best work is yet to be done.

*Bruce G. Hallenbeck has contributed to Cinefantastique, Little Shoppe of Horrors, and Fangoria.*



**ROBERT BLOCH**  
*Continued from page 37*

the Ripper". The time has passed for that, so I wrote the novel, got it out of my system, and I hope it stays that way!

*SS: How many short stories have you written?*

**RB:** I probably have written 400 at most, plus a great number of articles and essays and introductions and that sort of thing.

*SS: Is there any particular work that you feel is your best?*

**RB:** I think—and this is not a plug—but I think my autobiography is my best work. It is one of the few opportunities I have had for being myself as a writer. I didn't have to impersonate my characters, or impersonate the type of narrator who'd be writing about this particular subject matter and material. My favorite short story for many years was one called "The Movie People", merely because it is so antithetical to the sort of thing that I usually write, and so close to my own likes and loves in real life.

*SS: What did you discover about Robert Bloch in writing his story?*

**RB:** I discovered that he is undoubtedly a very, very schizoid individual, that when he sits down at the typewriter he's entirely different from when he gets up from the typewriter. I also discovered that his public persona is totally different from his private persona.

*SS: In what way?*

**RB:** I've always been very shy and introverted, and I think that writing was communication once removed—because, in the days when I started out, writers were people who were not team players, who were not at ease with people. That's why they chose to become writers. They sat in a room, they wrote, they mailed it out. It appeared in print and they didn't have to meet or mingle with the public. Then things changed. Today, writers have to be performers, they have to be on talk shows, have to do interviews such as this one, have to meet people at conventions, have to do signings at

book stores, have to be scintillating enough to hold an audience. There are some writers who defiantly refuse to do that, but only because they are wealthy enough that they don't have to. When you reach a point of financial security such as was reached 30 years ago by Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., you don't have to go out and do this kind of thing. You can sneer at the people who demean themselves. But for the majority of writers, this is considered part and parcel of the job. I've had to adapt a public persona and try my damndest to make myself interesting enough so that people are willing to put up with me. It's much easier to do in print than it is in person.

*SS: If you had not become a writer, what career might you have pursued?*

**RB:** My parents and I thought that I might become an artist. But my eyesight posed a problem, I thought, and my parents thought, wisely and correctly, that in the Depression artists didn't make much of a living! So I thought I might become a schoolteacher, but I had no desire to be a schoolteacher. I don't know; my own personal, private ambition was to become a burlesque comic! (Laughs) But competition and the Depression was too great, and a novice youngster would not be considered for the rough-and-tumble competition of a profession that was vanishing.

*SS: What is Robert Bloch's typical method of writing?*

**RB:** Well, it's an unvarying thing, with only a few exceptions. I sit down and write a treatment, a synopsis, which I use as a guideline for doing the whole story. I know there are writers who don't know what's going to happen when they sit down at the typewriter, or in front of the computer screen, or the word processor—but that's never been the sort of thing that made sense to me. To me, a treatment or a synopsis is a map. It tells you where you're going and how you're going to get there. Unless you have a destination in mind, you have to wander. I use a treatment to do the same thing a comedian does when he builds up to a punch line. You have



*Yours Truly, Robert Bloch*

to snare and trap your audience, and catch them off guard so you can come up with a zinger that they're not expecting. That's the plot. And for one who's writing mystery and suspense, it's necessary to keep the readers off guard and then tell them something to startle, shock them, and deliver the punch in that fashion. Both of these things require preparation. They can't be done ad-lib or off the top of one's head to be effective. They have to be crafted.

*SS: Is there any advice you give to people who want to write?*

**RB:** I really have very little advice to give any would-be writer except, "Why don't you try plumbing?" It's much more profitable and there's more security in it.

*SS: Any words for your legion of fans?*

**RB:** As far as readers are concerned, they proceed at their own risk, when they open anything that I have written. But I'm grateful for the fact that they have read, and continue to read, my work for over 58 years. Hard to believe.

*SS: And they still enjoy it.*

**RB:** They probably still enjoy it. I certainly don't. I don't enjoy writing; I only enjoy having written. But the actual act—it's like having a baby, you know? Women don't like labor pains and gestation. They like having delivered the child.

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## WHO SLEW AUNTIE ROO

*Continued from page 95*

he might pinch Rosie's jewels, does nothing to endear the boy to the audience.)

Entering a gawky, coltish period with 1978's *CROSSED SWORDS* (a reworking of Mark Twain's *The Prince and the Pauper*), Lester left the screen soon after. Recent reports have the former child star working as a bartender.

Shelley Winters' portrayal of Rosie Forrest is not up to the high standards set by her Helen Hill in *WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HELEN?*, but it is nonetheless an attention grabber. The actress' less actressy moments are imbued with a sympathetic grasp of Rosie's emotional torment; unfortunately, the requirements of the script are such that, in her scenes with Christopher, Auntie Roo must display at least some of the traits of a standard fairy-tale witch. In such circumstances, the temptation to overact must be practically overwhelming, and Winters falls victim.

Away from the children, particularly in her scenes with Ralph Richardson and Michael Gothard, Winters is in fine form. (This is all the more impressive when one recalls that this is the period of Winters' wildest excesses, among them her performances in 1968's *WILD IN THE STREETS* and 1970's *BLOODY MAMA*.)

**WHO SLEW AUNTIE ROO?** finds gold in its supporting players; Richardson, Lionel Jeffries, Hugh Griffith, Rosalie Crutchley, and Pat Heywood are all thorough professionals, contributing what are in fact entertaining cameos—the bulk of screen time going to Winters, Lester, and Chloe Franks. Relative newcomers Judy Cornwell and Michael Gothard (the latter committed suicide earlier this year) have more to do, and do it well, but depart midway through the picture. (Unexpectedly, when Gothard's character, Albie, blackmails Rosie, the distraught woman doesn't react with violence; the only character to be murdered in *WHO SLEW AUNTIE ROO?* is Rosie herself.)

Curtis Harrington makes the most of what the script has to offer—the director managed to rework much of Robert Blees and Jimmy Sangster's screenplay before the cameras rolled—and in several scenes transcends the material. During a seance at which the mystic circle is formed by Rosie, Benton, Albie, and the late Katharine's teddy bear, Katy wanders into the room. In three shots, taken from Rosie's perspective, the camera cuts progressively closer to the child standing in the doorway, while simultaneously tracking in—the effect being not unlike a combination of a Hitch-

cock point-of-view sequence and Boris Karloff's first entrance in *FRANKENSTEIN* (1931). In another scene, when Katy tries to slide down the bannister, the panic-stricken Rosie remembers (in sepia-toned slow motion) the death of her beloved daughter, who fell from the same bannister to the hallway below.

A few moments of Grand Guignol are provided by the sadistic Albie, who threatens Christopher with a knife (later, pulling the boy by the ear, he mutters "I think he likes it.") and scares the hell out of the kids in a room filled with magician's paraphernalia—including a guillotine.

If the final product isn't as personal as *NIGHT TIDE* (1963), *GAMES* (1967), *WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HELEN?*, and *THE KILLING KIND*, Harrington is too professional to treat the film as no more than an assignment. Coming at a time when American International's best days were gone, Hammer Films was about to close its doors, and horror was treading bloody water (awaiting a flood of gore-filled slasher films), *WHO SLEW AUNTIE ROO?* is a cut—and a cleaver—above the crowd.

## WHO SLEW AUNTIE ROO?

### Credits

An American International/Hemdale Production. Director: Curtis Harrington. Produced by Samuel Z. Arkoff and James H. Nicholson. Executive Producer: Louis M. Heyward. Associate Producer: John Pellatt. Original Screen Story: David Osborne. Screenplay: Robert Blees; James Sangster. Additional Dialogue: Gavin Lambert. Color by Movielab. Casting: Sally Nicholl. Production Manager: Donald Toms. Assistant Director: Colin Brewer. Wardrobe Supervisor: Bridget Sellers. Film Editor: Tristan Canes. Art Director: George Provis. Camera Operator: Norman Jones. Sound Recordists: Ken Ritchie; Richard Langford. Sound Editor: Peter Lennard. Makeup: Effie Knight; Sylvia Craft. Continuity: June Randall. Hairdressing: Pat McDermott; Joyce James. Music: Kenneth V. Jones.

### Cast

Shelley Winters (Rosie Forrest), Mark Lester (Christopher Combs), Ralph Richardson (Mr. Benton), Chloe Franks (Katy Combs), Lionel Jeffries (Inspector Willoughby), Michael Gothard (Albie), Judy Cornwell (Clarine), Rosalie Crutchley (Miss Henley), Hugh Griffith (Mr. Harrison), Pat Heywood (Dr. Mason), Richard Beaumont (Peter Brookshire), Jacqueline Cowper (Angela), Charlotte Sayce (Katherine), Marianne Stone (Miss Wilcox).



# PARTING SHOT

Quotations compiled by Jessie Lilley

There's a castle right ahead. The hero has just had a drink in a Transylvanian tavern and it would be my opinion to suggest 'Don't drink too deep in Transylvanian taverns!'

JACK KEROUAC  
*review of Nosferatu*

Those things you see on the stage or the screen or the printed page, they never really happen to you in life.

F. SCOTT FITZGERALD

Missis Moriarty goes about wid a shinin' look on her face;

Wid her grey hair under her ould black shawl, and the eyes of her mother-mild;

Some say she's a little bit off her head; but anyway it's the case...

ROBERT SERVICE  
*Missis Moriarty's Boy*

Mothers of America  
let your kids go to the movies!  
get them out of the house so they won't know what you're up to...

FRANK O'HARA  
*Ave Maria*

Evil is easy, and has infinite forms.

PASCAL

I'm a student of violence because I'm a student of the human heart.

SAM PECKINPAH

... it is impossible to be in love with a woman without experiencing on occasions an irresistible desire to strangle her. This can lead to a good deal of ill-feeling. Women are touchy about being strangled.

GEORGE SANDERS  
*Memoirs of a Professional Cad*

Even if you don't like your mother, she's still your mother.

ELDAR RYAZANOV

Veda's been here for about a month now, Mildred, and I think I know the best way to handle her. Let me give you a little advice: if you want her to do anything for you, just hit her in the head first.

RANALD MACDOUGALL  
*Mildred Pierce*

... the only person who ever loves a critic is his mother and an actor who has had a good notice from him. There are not enough critics' mothers or favorably noticed actors in the world to fill the cinemas.

GEORGE SANDERS  
*Memoirs of a Professional Cad*

I have the heart of a small boy. I keep it in a jar on my desk.

ROBERT BLOCH  
*Twentieth-Century Crime and Mystery Writers*

Judge not—at least until the evidence is unequivocal.

COLIN DEXTER

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KING KONG VS. GODZILLA (J)  
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ATTACK OF THE MUSHROOM PEOPLE (E)+(J)  
DAGORA THE SPACE MONSTER (J)+(E)  
VARAN (E)+(J)  
YOG- MONSTER FROM SPACE (E)+(J)  
BATTLE IN OUTER SPACE (E)+(J)  
EVIL OF DRACULA (E)  
LAKE OF DRACULA (E)  
ESP-Y (E)  
WAR IN SPACE (E)  
GAMERA VS. MONSTER X (E)+(J)  
8 MAN: FOR ALL LONELY NIGHTS (J)  
VOYAGE INTO SPACE (E)  
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KAMEN RIDER V3: VOL. 1-13 (J)  
KAMEN RIDER X: VOL. 1 (J)  
KAMEN RIDER AMAZON: VOL. 1 (J)  
KAMEN RIDER STRONGER: VOL. 1-5 (J)  
KAMEN RIDER SKYRIDER: VOL. 1 (J)  
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KAMEN RIDER BLACK: VOL. 1-10 (J)  
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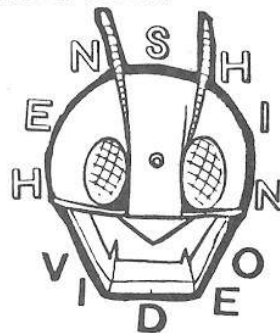
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## PERVERSION (Estupro—Perversao)

1978 color

This movie is sick! Marins plays a millionaire with bizarre sexual habits. In one of his most "inspired" moments, he bites off a girl's nipple only to show it as a trophy to his friends. The original title *Estupro* (Rape) had to be changed due to censorship.



## THE END OF MAN (Finis Hominis)

1971 b&w

This is Marins' "serious" movie. He plays Finis Hominis, a preacher with alleged supernatural powers. See Mojica waking up the dead, curing paraplegics and penetrating the psychedelic world of the hippies. A very interesting study on the exploration of faith and mysticism.



## THE STRANGE HOSTEL OF NAKED PLEASURES (A Estranha Hospedaria dos Prazeres)

1975 color

Produced by Jose' Mojica Marins and directed by his disciple Marcelo Motta, this horror movie shows Mojica as the owner of a haunted hostel where the guests can make their most abnormal dreams come true. The many bizarre scenes invoke the same ambience as his earlier banned film *Awakenings of the Beast* (1968). There's plenty of violence.



## THIS NIGHT I WILL POSSESS YOUR CORPSE (Esta Noite Encarnarei no Teu Cadaver)

1968 b&w w/color insert

In this sequel to the classic *At Midnight I Will Take Your Soul*, Ze do Caixao (Coffin Joe) continues his search for the perfect woman that will give him a perfect child. This film has some of the most intense horror scenes of Mojica's career. See him crushing people's heads in his horror chamber, torturing innocent women with 50 real tarantulas and finally meeting the incarnated spirits. The movie is in black & white, except for an outstanding sequence in which Coffin Joe is dragged to Hell, where he is forced to watch all kinds of atrocities. The poster for this movie reads: "SEE HELL IN COLOR!"

• • • • •

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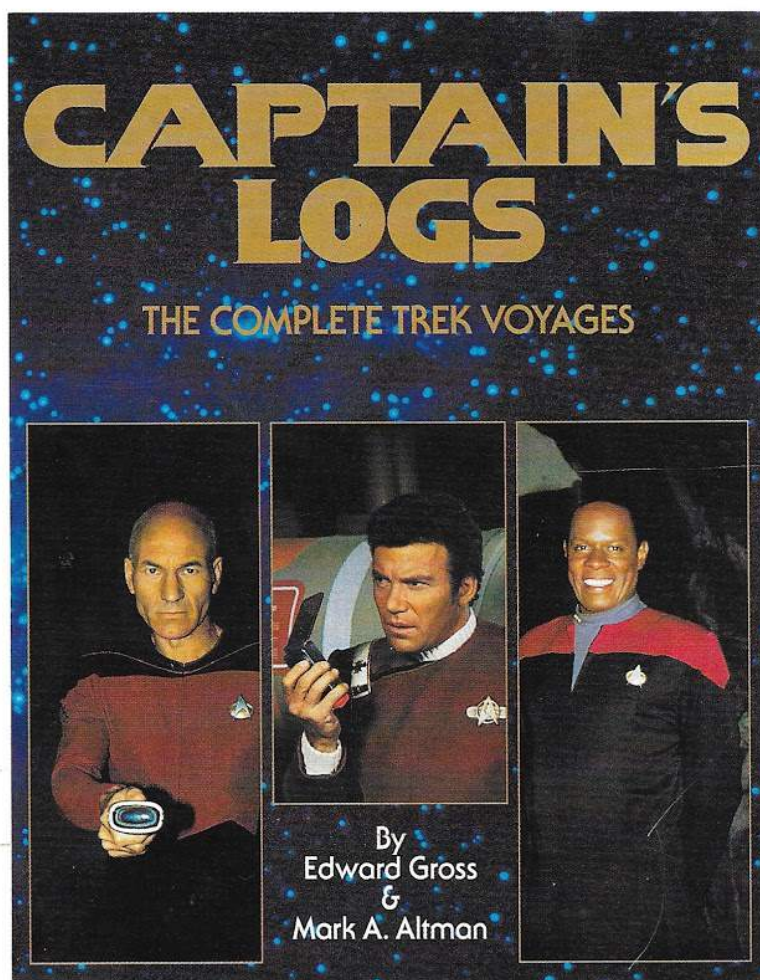




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Directed by **WILL KILL**

Produced by **RONALD KENNEDY**

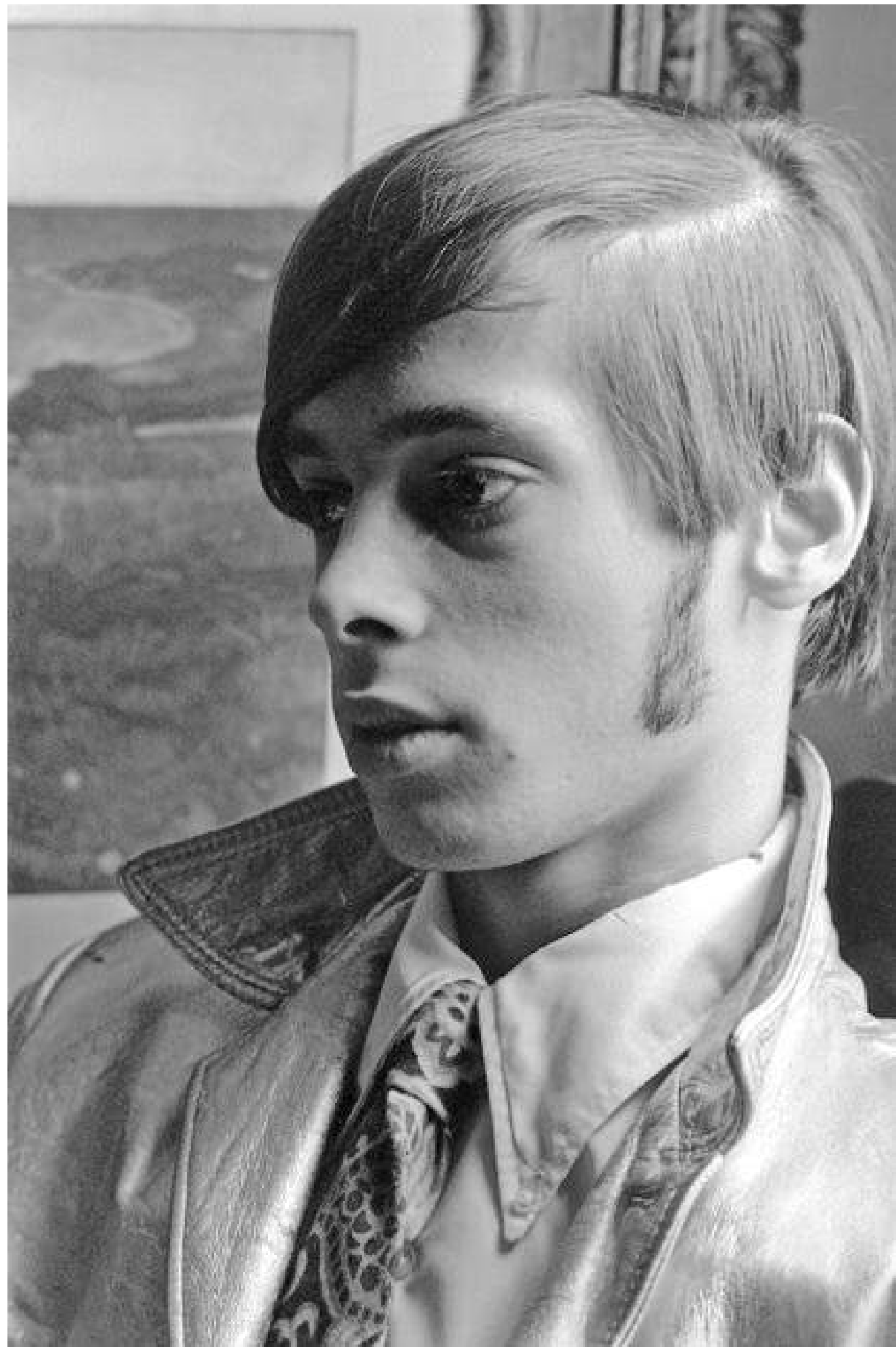
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Based on the Novel "The Phantom Cottage" by **JOHN WYNDHAM**

















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GEORGE BARCLAY

Director de

WOLF RILLA - RONALD KINNOCH

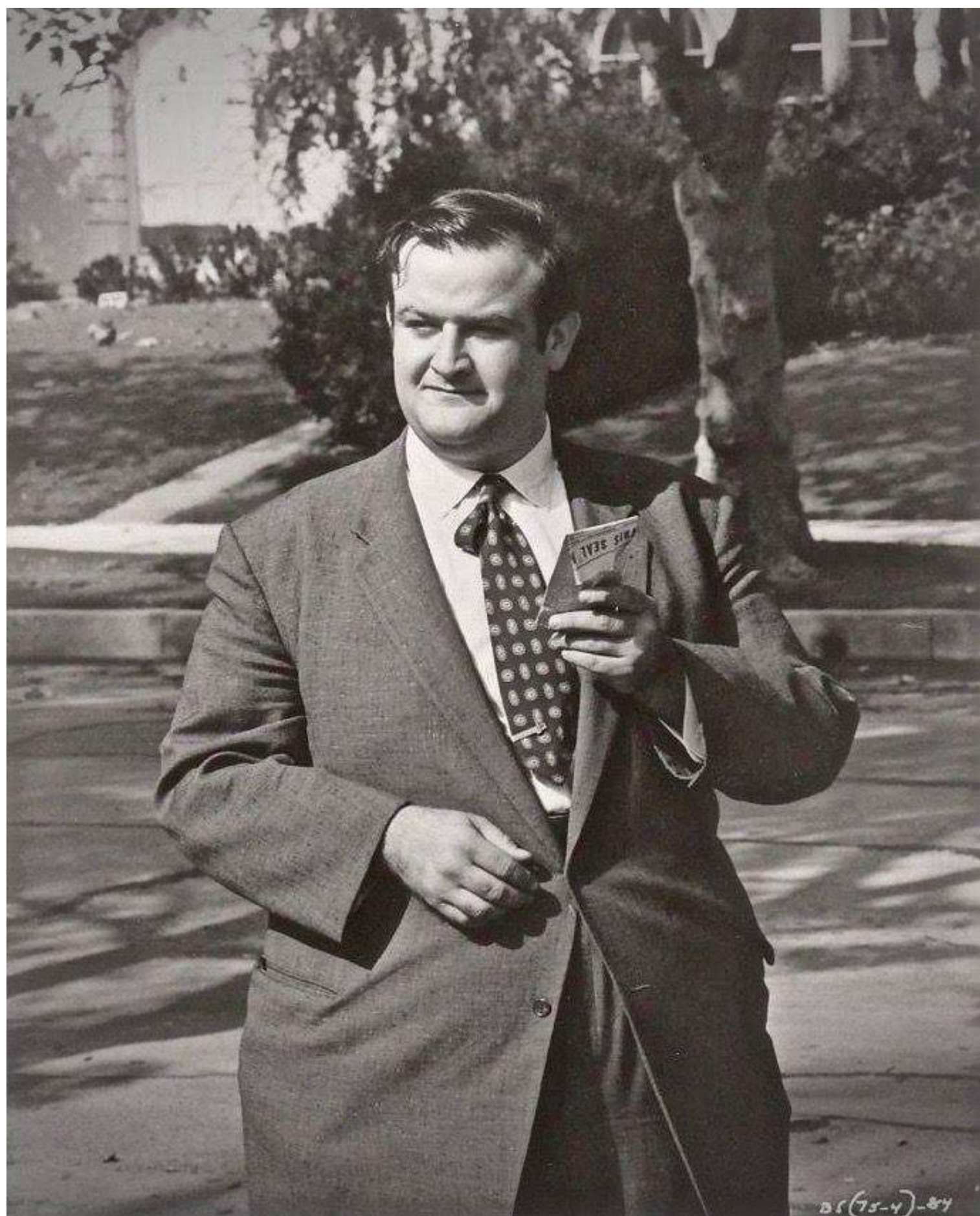
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and  
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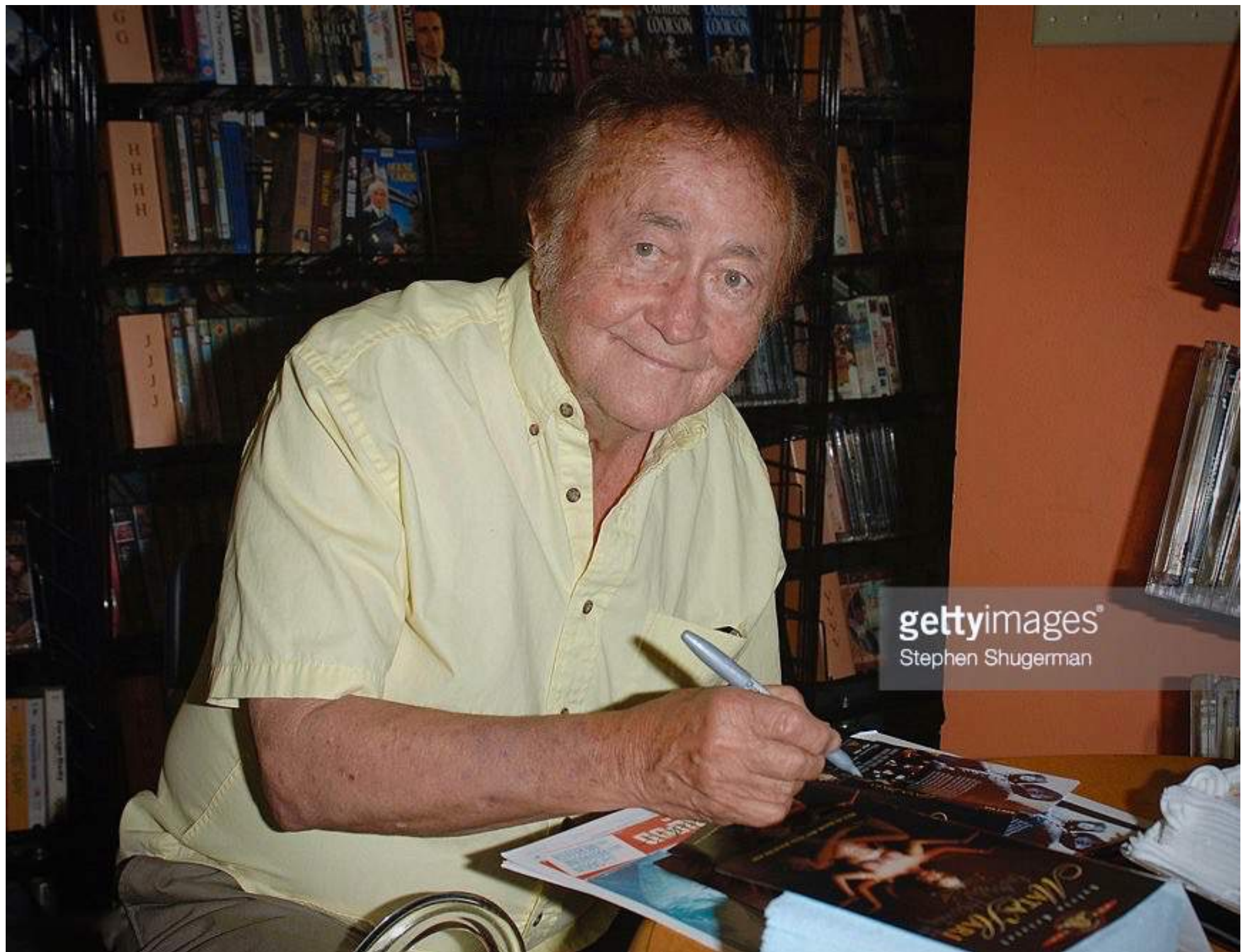
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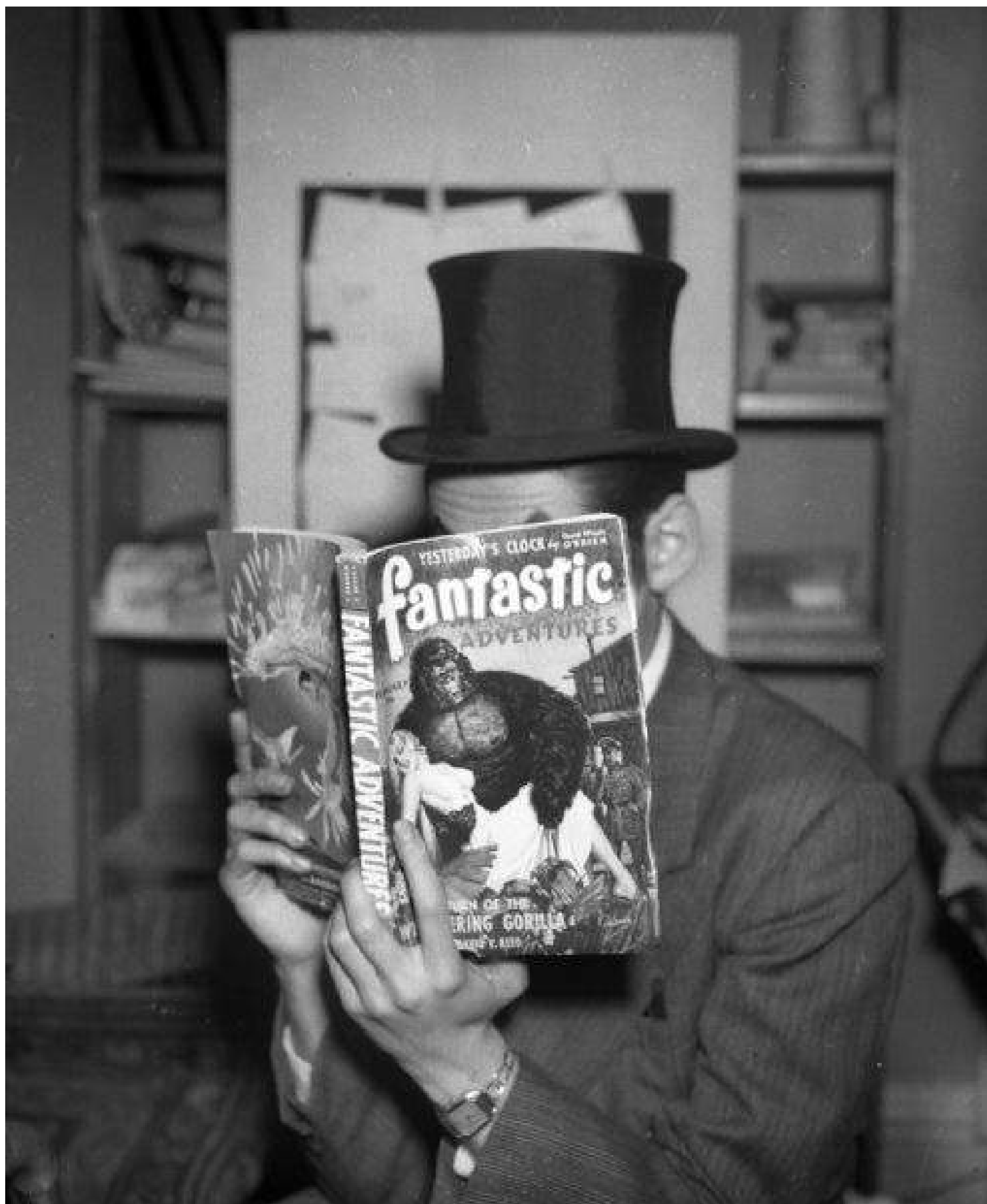
























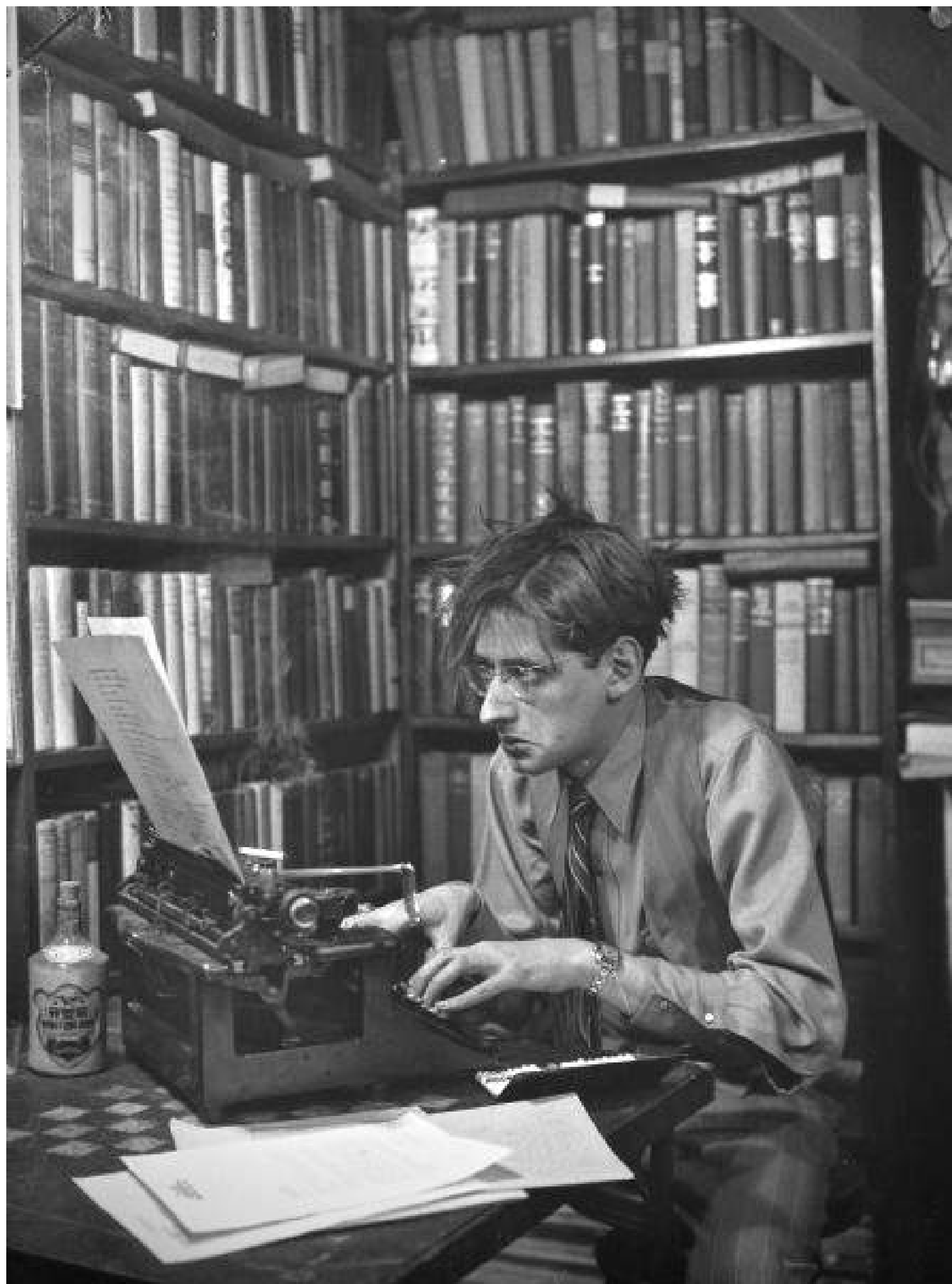


















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"VILLAGE OF THE DAMNED"

*avec*  
**MICHAEL GWYNN**

*Mise en scène:* WOLF RILLA • *Production:* RONALD KINNOCH

## HET DORP DER VERVLOEKTEN





















































To John  
best wishes  
Barbara  
Shelley

















Barbara  
Shelley





















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Screenplay by **Sterling Silliphant, Wolf Rilla and George Berday**

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The Turtles family: Wilbur (JERRY STILLER), Tracy (RICKI LAKE) and Edna (DIVINE) and the Von Tussle family: Amber (COLLEEN FITZPATRICK), Velma (DEBBIE HARRY) and Fenton (SONNY BONO)





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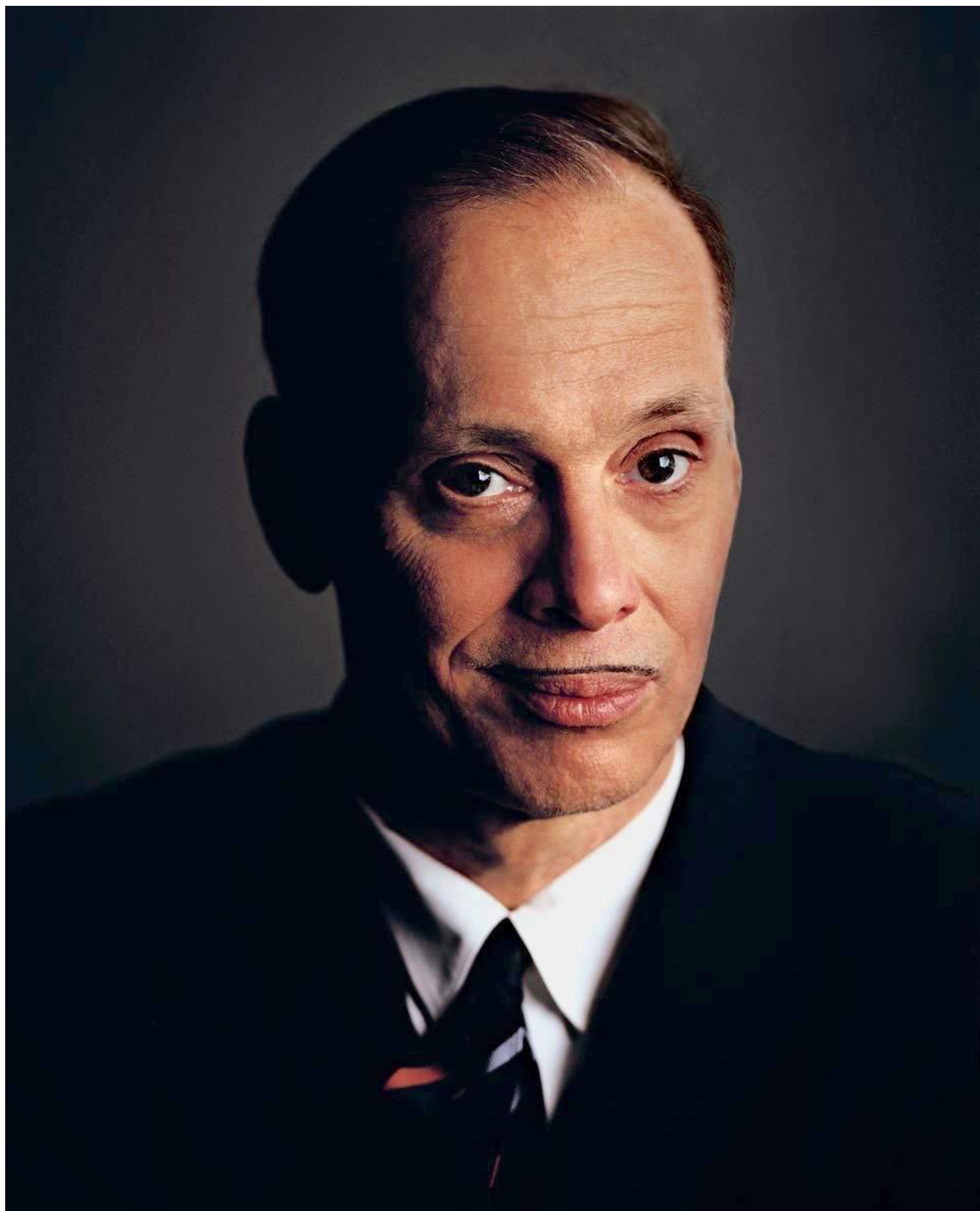


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The kind of  
Woman most  
men want -  
BUT  
SHOULDN'T  
HAVE!  
That's...

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**CRAWFORD**  
JACK  
**CARSON**  
ZACHARY  
**SCOTT**

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ARDEN · BLYTH · BENNETT  
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Screen Play by Herman J. Mankiewicz and Joseph L. Mankiewicz  
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*Robert Bloch*

























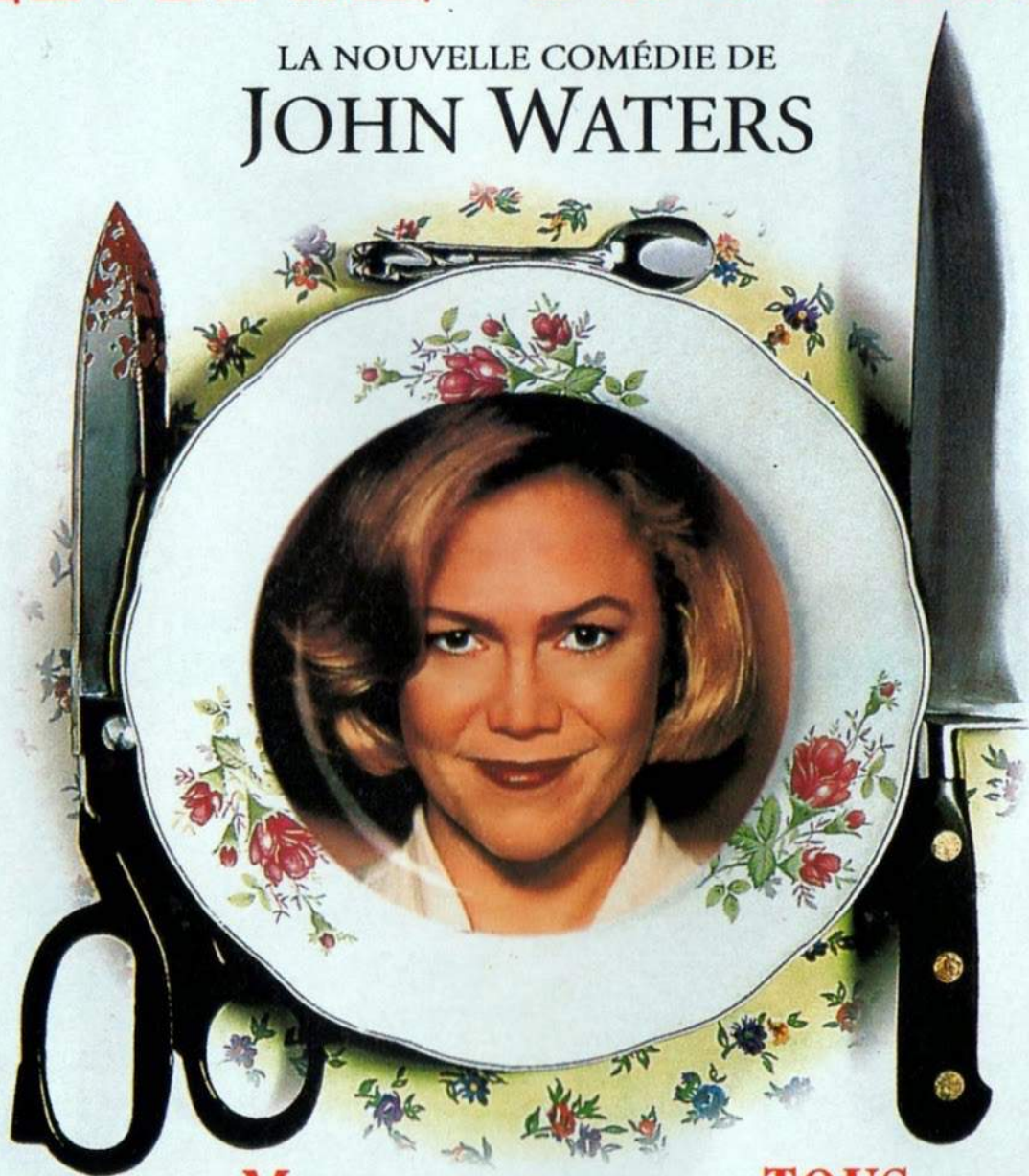


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**Curtis Harrington**



























WHAT  
UNNATURAL  
TWIST IN  
HIS MIND  
MAKES  
HIM  
DO  
IT  
?



**VICTOR BUONO** as **THE STRANGLER**

Shock Sensation of  
"Baby Jane"

Starring **DAVID McLEAN · DIANE SAYER · ELLEN CORBY · DAVEY DAVISON**

and introducing

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with  
**MICHAEL GWYNN**

Screen Play by  
**STIRLING SILLIPHANT**  
**WOLF RILLA** **GEORGE BARCLAY**  
Based on the Novel "The Midwich Cuckoos"  
by JOHN WYNDHAM

Directed by  
**WOLF RILLA**  
Produced by  
**RONALD KINNOCH**



Metro Goldwyn-Mayer  
PRÉSENTE

**GEORGE SANDERS  
BARBARA SHELLEY**



# Le Village des Dammes

d'après le roman de  
JOHN WYNDHAM

avec **MICHAEL GWYNN**

Réalisation de  
WOLF RILLA

Production de  
RONALD KINNOCH

INTERDIT AUX  
MOINS DE 18 ANS



At Auntie  
Roo's house  
the hand  
that rocks  
the cradle  
has  
no  
flesh  
on it!



JAMES H. NICHOLSON and  
SAMUEL Z. ARKOFF present

SHELLEY WINTERS  
MARK LESTER  
RALPH RICHARDSON in



# Who SLEW AUNTIE ROO?

co-starring

JUDY  
CORNWELL

MICHAEL  
GOTHARD

HUGH  
GRIFFITH

as The Pigman

and  
LIONEL  
JEFFRIES  
as Willoughby

**GP** ALL AGES ADMITTED  
Parental Guidance Suggested

THIS FILM CONTAINS MATERIAL  
NOT GENERALLY SUITABLE  
FOR PRE-TEENAGERS

Screenplay by ROBERT BLEES and JAMES SANGSTER · Additional dialogue by GAVIN LAMBERT · Based on an original story by DAVID OSBORN · Music by KENNETH V. JONES  
Executive Producer LOUIS M. HEYWARD · Produced by SAMUEL Z. ARKOFF and JAMES H. NICHOLSON · Directed by CURTIS HARRINGTON  
An AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL/HEMDALE PRODUCTION

**COLOR** BY MOVIELAB





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